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ABSTRACT

One of a series written for child caregivers working in military day care centers, this book is about creating environments for "pretoddlers," children 13 through 24 months of age. The book is divided into two parts, with selected resources at the end. Part 1 discusses some ways to organize and arrange physical space for pretoddlers, providing several checklists for assessing center environments. Part 2 suggests ways to use people and materials in the center space. Managing the center environment for pretoddlers' development, encouraging development through play, using materials creatively, and finding resources are among the topics discussed. Checklists related to each of these topics are provided along with a brief annotated bibliography of related books and records. (RH)

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Creating Environments For Pretoddlers

Child Environment Series

Military Child Care Project

PS013157

April 1982

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
MANPOWER, RESERVE AFFAIRS, AND LOGISTICS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

MANPOWER,
RESERVE AFFAIRS
AND LOGISTICS
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01 APR 1982

FOREWORD

This series of manuals for Child Care Givers on DoD Installations is issued under the authority of DoD Instruction 6060.1, "Training Manuals for Child Care Givers on DoD Installations," January 19, 1981. Its purpose is to provide child care givers with training materials that include the latest techniques and procedures for the safe care and guiding development of children entrusted to their care.

This series of manuals, DoD 6060.1-M-1 through DoD 6060.1-M-17, was developed under the auspices of the Department of Health and Human Services by the Department of Army, in cooperation with the Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

The provisions of this series of manuals apply to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments, and the Defense Agencies (hereafter referred to as DoD Components) whose heads shall ensure that the manuals are distributed or otherwise made available to all child care givers on DoD installations and that these materials are used in regional and inter-Service workshops, seminars, and training sessions.

This series of manuals is effective immediately.

Send recommended changes to the manuals through channels to:

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R. Dean Tice
Lieutenant General, USA
Deputy Assistant Secretary

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Creating Environments For Pretoddlers
(13 to 24 Months)

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INTRODUCTION

en-vi-ron-ment *the total of those things which surround; surroundings, including both people and things.*

This book is about creating environments for pretoddlers - children 13 through 24 months of age. What children see, hear, smell, taste and touch affects how they feel and behave. Children watch and learn from everything that surrounds them. Their experiences are shaped by the people and things around them.

This book is divided into two parts, with selected resources at the end. PART ONE outlines some ways to organize and arrange physical space. PART TWO suggests some good ways to use the people and things in that space. The environments we describe are designed to help children be successful and grow towards independence. Feelings of success grow out of finding toys and experiences that are fun and provide some challenge. Independence comes as children learn and practice new skills through the play they choose.

There is a lot of information in this book. Nearly every page talks about a different and important idea. We suggest that you read and do the checklist at the end of just one section at a time. Once you have read the whole book, keep it handy so you can refer to it from time to time.

We do not pretend to provide all the answers. All we can do is present a beginning or guide. It is up to each caregiver to use and add to this basic information in individual and creative ways. Good child care programs happen when caregivers know and understand their pretoddlers and have fun with them. So watch the children in your care. Think about how they react to their surroundings. Then you can evaluate, plan and manage environments especially for pretoddlers.

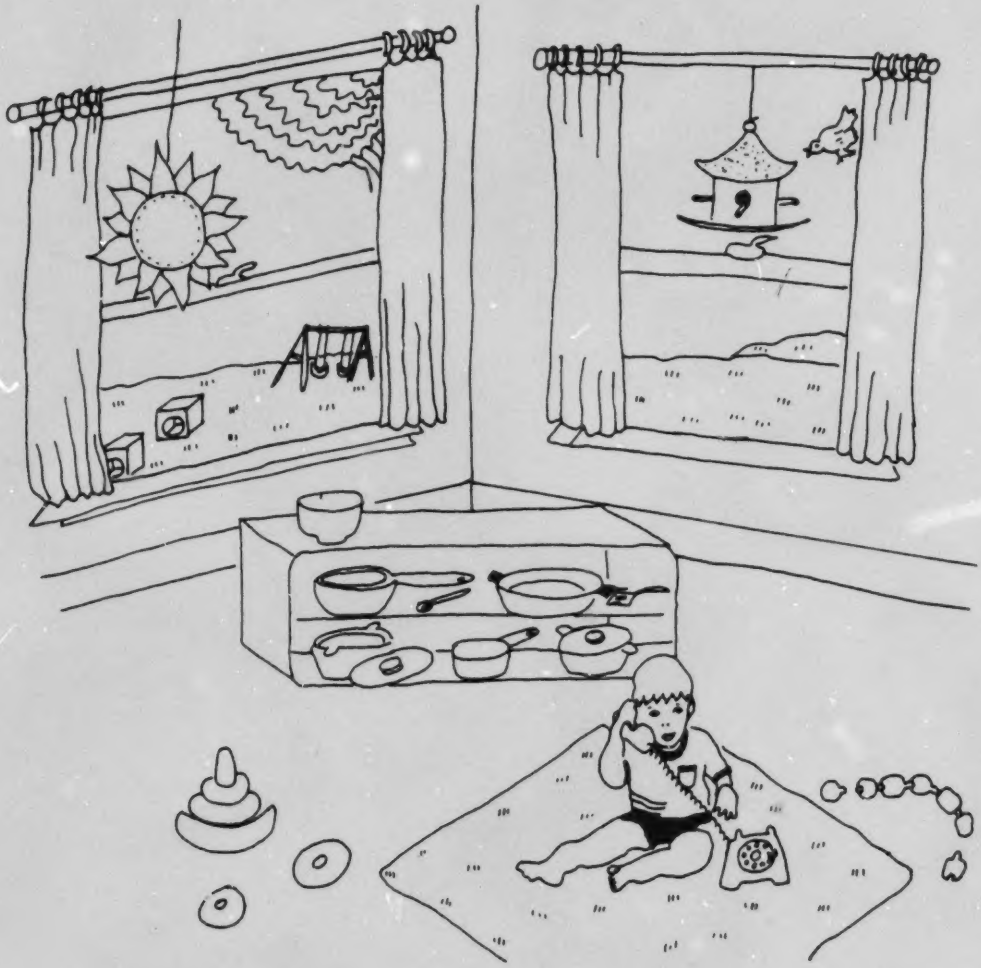
PLANNING YOUR CENTER'S PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

PART ONE

In PART ONE you will discover:

- how environments affect feelings and behavior
- good ways to organize indoor and outdoor play areas to offer pretoddlers a variety of experiences
- checklists for rating your center's environment

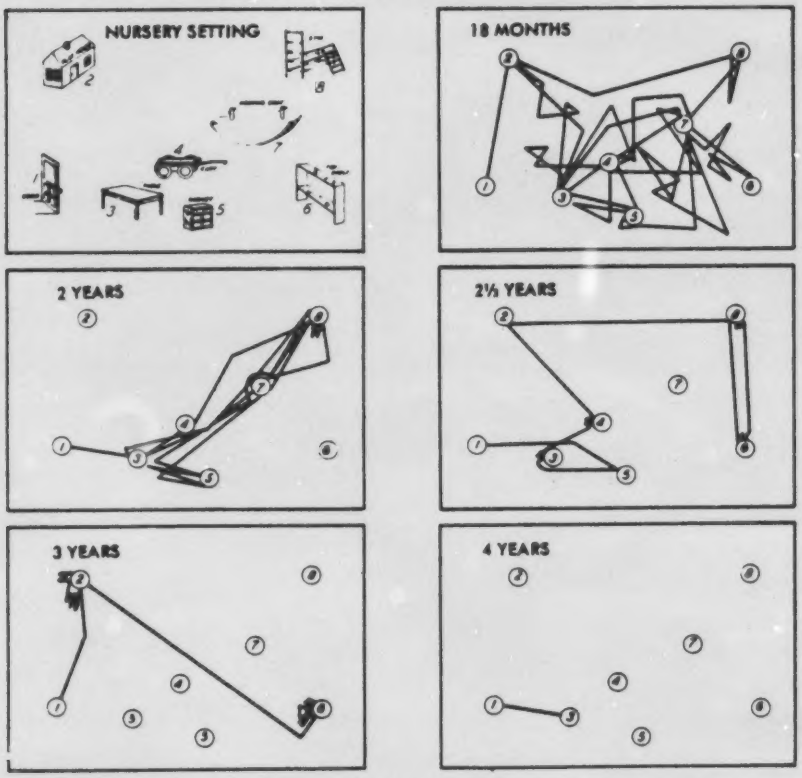
RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTS



YOUNG CHILDREN USE ENVIRONMENTS DIFFERENTLY

The drawing on this page shows how children just two-and-a-half years apart in age use space in such different ways. This nursery setting has eight points of interest: (1) door (2) playhouse (3) table (4) cart (5) cabinet (6) toy shelf (7) rocking boat and (8) gym. Children of different ages were charted for periods of seven minutes. Notice how much moving about an 18-month-old child does in comparison to a four year old. The older child will stay longer with something interesting. For the younger child everything in the room is interesting. The younger child appears to be in constant motion. Once a toy is reached or a ladder climbed, the 18 month old is quickly off to find another interesting object or to try another activity.

This drawing shows the ground covered by typical children during only seven *minutes of play:**



*Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row, publishers, Inc., in *Infant And Child In The Culture Of Today*, revised edition, by Arnold Gesell, Francis L. Ilg and Louise Bates Ames, 1974 by Gesell Institute of Child Development, p. 23.

CENTER ENVIRONMENTS SPEAK TO PRETODDLERS

Although pretoddlers are just learning to talk, it does not mean that they are not busy learning about their world. They see and take in much more than they are able to tell us. Since birth they have been watching their world. They grow to be like the people and things around them. For children in a military setting, that may mean growing up seeing plain, square buildings and the orderly layout of the installation. The child care center is usually a part of that same community. Often the center is in a building designed for a commissary or a hospital. The square rooms, high ceilings or regulation colors pose a real challenge to the caregivers who use them. That challenge is to create an interesting environment - one which invites pretoddlers to wonder, explore, learn and grow.

Here are some ways that environments affect young children:

Changing environments can make a difference. The unusual case of a little girl found locked away by her family shows what a big difference surroundings can make in growth and development. This child was six-and-a-half when discovered. She had badly bowed legs. Rickets had developed from lack of sunshine and poor diet. She didn't speak or know how to play with toys and feared others. With tender care and lots of expert help, she quickly went through all the stages of learning from one to six far more rapidly than normal. In just two years she spoke, ran and played like other children. This rare case clearly shows how important environments are for young children.

Noise reduces hearing abilities. Living in an apartment built on bridges over an expressway affected the hearing of children who had lived there for four or more years. Loud noises came from both the automobiles and the other apartments. While not showing a hearing loss on any tests, these children had difficulty in hearing the distinct sounds of letters. This led to reading difficulties. The children simply had lost the ability to hear sounds because they had tuned out the noise in their environment for so long.

THE MILITARY CENTER IS PART OF A LARGER ENVIRONMENT

The military child care center is a part of the larger community created by the installation. The center environment should be planned with the needs and life-styles of children from military families in mind. For example, children may have to learn to live with frequent moves or separation from a parent. Of course, children growing up in civilian families may face some of the same situations. It is just that children in military families may have experiences like the ones below more often.

Cultural differences in the home With military installations all over the world, it is not uncommon for one parent to be from a culture different from the other. These children can learn firsthand about two cultures.

Living in close quarters Military housing may require family members and different families to live close together. Neighbors learn to share and help each other.

Death Death is a fact of life. In the military setting many people learn to face the reality of death and live fuller lives as a result.

Exposure to differences Children in military families may live in integrated installation housing or attend integrated schools, churches and hospitals. They have the benefit of a broad exposure to cultural differences.

Moving Frequent moves uproot families from the support of their communities, friends and close relatives, especially grandparents. Adjusting to new environments helps young children learn to be more adaptable.

Non-traditional family structures Duty may call a father or mother away for a week, a month or a year. Although this may be difficult, it can help develop independence and self-reliance.

Travel/language With installations all over the world, children find themselves in other lands hearing and learning different languages. They may see customs and eat foods new to them.

THE ENVIRONMENT AFFECTS FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOR

Pretoddlers, unlike adults, must rely on all their senses to learn about their world. For example, adults have had many past experiences with "softness." They don't actually have to touch grass, a rabbit or velvet ribbon to know how these things feel. Adults who understand and respect pretoddlers' developing senses plan the child care center environment carefully. What pretoddlers see, smell, hear, touch and taste affects their feelings and behavior. The center may be far different from their customary world. You will want to do all you can to help each child feel comfortable and secure, yet interested and challenged. Every center is different and caregivers have different ways of doing things. However, there are some general guidelines which will help you.

Here are some ways to plan a pretoddler environment that appeals to their senses:

Taste Food is important to pretoddlers. Nutritious, tasty meals and snacks pleasantly served both nourish and please these young children. Toys, which may end up in mouths, should be clean and disinfected.

Touch Pretoddlers learn about different textures by feeling them. They can feel texture books, animals, rugs, pillows, caregivers' clothing, grass, sand and tree bark.

Sight Anything in clear view is of interest to pretoddlers. They will play with anything they can see and reach whether it is cleaning powder or scraps in a wastebasket.

Smell Young children have a very good sense of smell. Besides a clean environment, you can make the center more appealing with the aroma of flowers, spice-smelling jars or baking food.

Hearing The hearing of young children is very keen. Loud noises can be disturbing. Sound-absorbing materials such as drapes, carpeting or acoustic tile reduce the noise level in child care centers. This helps to make a positive environment.

ADULTS WORK BETTER IN COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENTS

The child care center is planned mostly for the children it serves. It also should be comfortable and planned for the adults who work there. Small details like a convenient diapering area and adequate storage are important. Then caregivers can complete their tasks quickly and easily. Helping pretoddlers in a group get through the daily routines, find play and solve their problems takes a lot of energy and your total attention. There is little time to relax and talk to other adults. It is essential that caregivers have a staff room where they can have a few minutes away from the children. Here adults can relax and safely enjoy a hot beverage. A work area with paper and other supplies makes it easier for caregivers to prepare materials for their rooms. Pay attention to any annoying parts of your day. Some simple changes in arrangements or routines might make your job easier and more pleasant.

Adults work better in comfortable, convenient surroundings:

A little privacy Caregivers should have a staff room and private bathroom. This allows for short breaks away from the sights and sounds of the children. A comfortable, attractive room helps staff morale. It is refreshing for caregivers to spend a few minutes doing whatever they choose in pleasant surroundings.

A place to sit To be at a child's eye level, caregivers spend most of their time on the floor or on child-sized chairs. Caregivers seldom have time to sit very long. One adult-sized soft chair in the room is handy for holding a pretoddler on your lap.

A convenient routine Remember, it is usually the people who use an environment who best can see good or bad arrangements. Look for ways to complete your routines with ease and convenience. Share your ideas with your director. A simple thing like having a cart for returning dishes to the kitchen may make your job easier. This gives you more time and energy for enjoying each pretoddler in your care.

CHECK YOUR CENTER AS AN ENVIRONMENT FOR STAFF

We have said that environments affect feelings and behavior. What is in the environment of the child care center is just as important to caregivers who work there as it is to the children. Put a check by the items below found in your center.

"ADULTS ONLY" ENVIRONMENT

____ locked storage for personal belongings

____ place to hang coat

____ staff room away from the sights and sounds of children

____ window to outside

____ adjustable heat/air conditioning

____ comfortable chairs

____ sofa or lounge

____ table and chairs

____ work area

____ private restroom

____ telephone

____ caregiver supplies

____ paper cutter

____ child care resource books

____ magazines

____ snacks, beverages available

____ sink, hot plate, refrigerator

____ things you can change, like furniture or bulletin board

____ opportunities to do things you like, such as to work cross-word puzzles

____ restroom regularly stocked with soap, towels and toilet paper

____ clutter and trash routinely removed

ADULTS IN THE CHILD ENVIRONMENT

____ convenient, closed indoor space

____ convenient, closed outdoor space

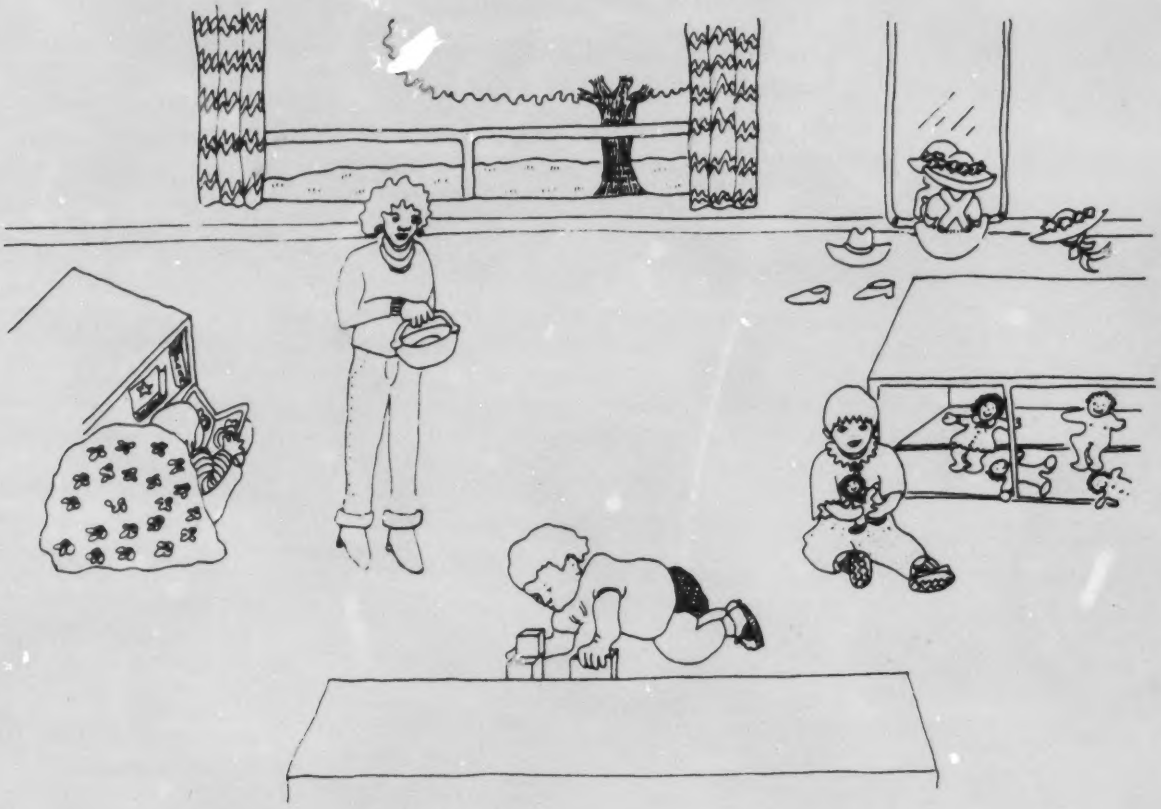
____ convenient, waist-high diapering table

____ comfortable chair for holding child

____ easy access to cleaning supplies

____ food-serving convenient to kitchen or cart or trays used to reduce steps and simplify routines

ARRANGING SPACE FOR PRETODDLERS



ORGANIZE SPACE TO SUPPORT PRETODDLER PLAY

The arrangement of space, play units and toys in your center can work for or against you. This is true both indoors and outdoors. An open environment allows caregivers to keep most of the children in clear view most of the time. A room without high partitions creates an open environment. Bushes, storage sheds or buildings should not block a caregiver's view outdoors. One year olds are approaching the time when accidents are most likely to occur. Constant supervision is important to reduce the risk of injury. Besides being easy to supervise, you will want the pretoddler environment to support the interests and activities of this age group.

Here are ways to support pretoddler play:

Low dividers Open shelves, furniture, logs, tires or bushes often are used to divide space in pretoddler play areas. When pretoddlers are standing, they can see over dividers that are between 12 and 18 inches high. Then a pretoddler is free to choose where to play next.

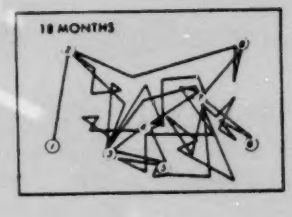
An indoor-outdoor connection It is best when young children can view the outdoor play space from indoors. When the outdoor play area is nearby, it is easy for caregivers and children to move from one place to the other. Water for drinking and the diapering area should be easy to reach from outdoors.

A variety of active and quiet play Pretoddlers like a change of pace and different activities. They like to practice running and walking, climbing up and knocking down, filling and dumping, putting together and taking things apart, opening and closing drawers, putting things through openings and spinning wheels.

Different levels of skill In any group of children, there is always a wide range of skills. Some children need space for improving their walking and running skills. Other children like space for whizzing around on kiddie cars. When equipment and toys allow for different levels of skill, children select those things they can and like to do.

LET OPEN SPACES BE THE KEY TO PRETODDLER AREAS

Pretoddlers do not move and play like older children. Well-planned uses of space both indoors and outdoors will reflect the age, abilities and interests of the one to two year olds. These young children need plenty of open space to practice walking, running, sliding and climbing. They do not play in small groups like older children. Instead, a pretoddler mostly plays alone even when near other children. While playing, a pretoddler will move back and forth between playing and wanting to be near an adult. Older children play for longer periods of time without needing this direct contact with an adult. For this reason, pretoddler environments should be arranged differently from those for older children. Pretoddlers need to get easily and quickly to a caregiver. This works best if a caregiver is centrally located to where the children are playing.



Consider these three possibilities for arranging pretoddler areas:

An open center with activity areas Low dividers and shelves can create small, separate areas. Use a gate which the child can open. This causes a child to slow down and think before entering an area. This way one or two pretoddlers, plus possibly a caregiver, can put pegs in a pegboard or look at books with fewer interruptions.

An open center with informal activity areas on the edges In some centers shelves and toys are arranged around the outside edges of the room. Pretoddlers can play at a variety of things - some here and some there. Then when a child wants adult help or attention, that child can find the caregiver in the center of the room.

Some semi-private spots for collections and play Another plan is to put some low shelves in the middle of the room. Arranging these in an irregular manner creates several small semi-private nooks. Children can play in these nooks and find places for collecting their toys. This plan helps reduce clutter.

OFFER INTERESTING AND CLEAR PATHWAYS

No matter how your indoor and outdoor environments are arranged, it is important that the children be able to see what is available and how to get there. The best way to check exactly what the children can see is to get down to their level. While kneeling, you will discover quickly if a bush or divider blocks the view from one place to another. Besides being able to see all play units and parts of the room or yard, the pretoddlers must have clear pathways to get to that sight or sound that interests them. These young children usually spend just a short time with one thing and then move to another. So they need a lot of different things to explore. But too many choices lead to confusion and clutter.

Here are some ways to provide choices and make them easy for pretoddlers to reach:

Create clear pathways. Pathways are empty, easy-to-see spaces that connect one place to another. Usually, they have the same surface as the surrounding floor or ground. To see if pathways are clear, an adult must kneel down and check them at child's eye level.

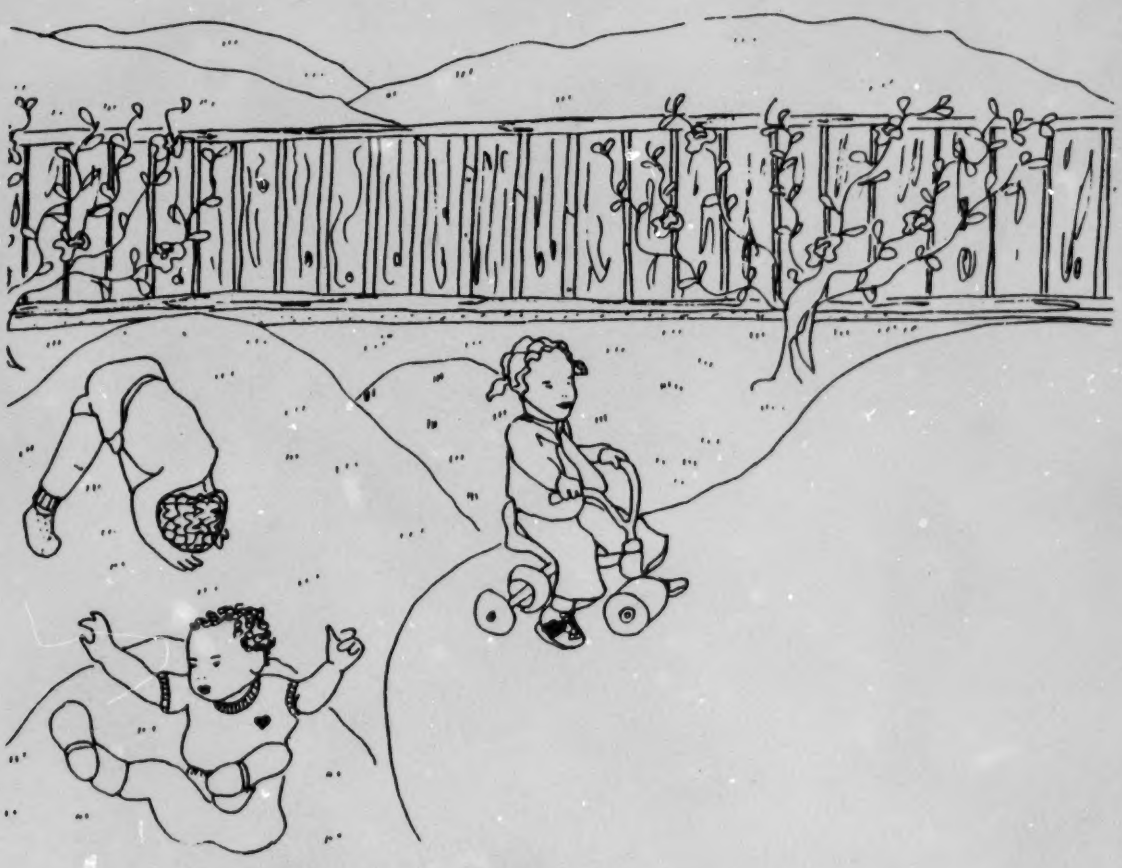
Go around, not through, areas. Pathways that lead around instead of through play areas are the best. If a child must cross the block play area or sandbox to get someplace else, that child is likely to disrupt another's play.

Connect play areas. Pathways should lead from one interesting area or activity to another. For example, as a pretoddler leaves the sandbox, a ramp may lead up a little hill to a slide.

Put enough space between play units. With too many play units or areas too close together there is no room for pathways. This results in pretoddlers bumping into one another as they move around.

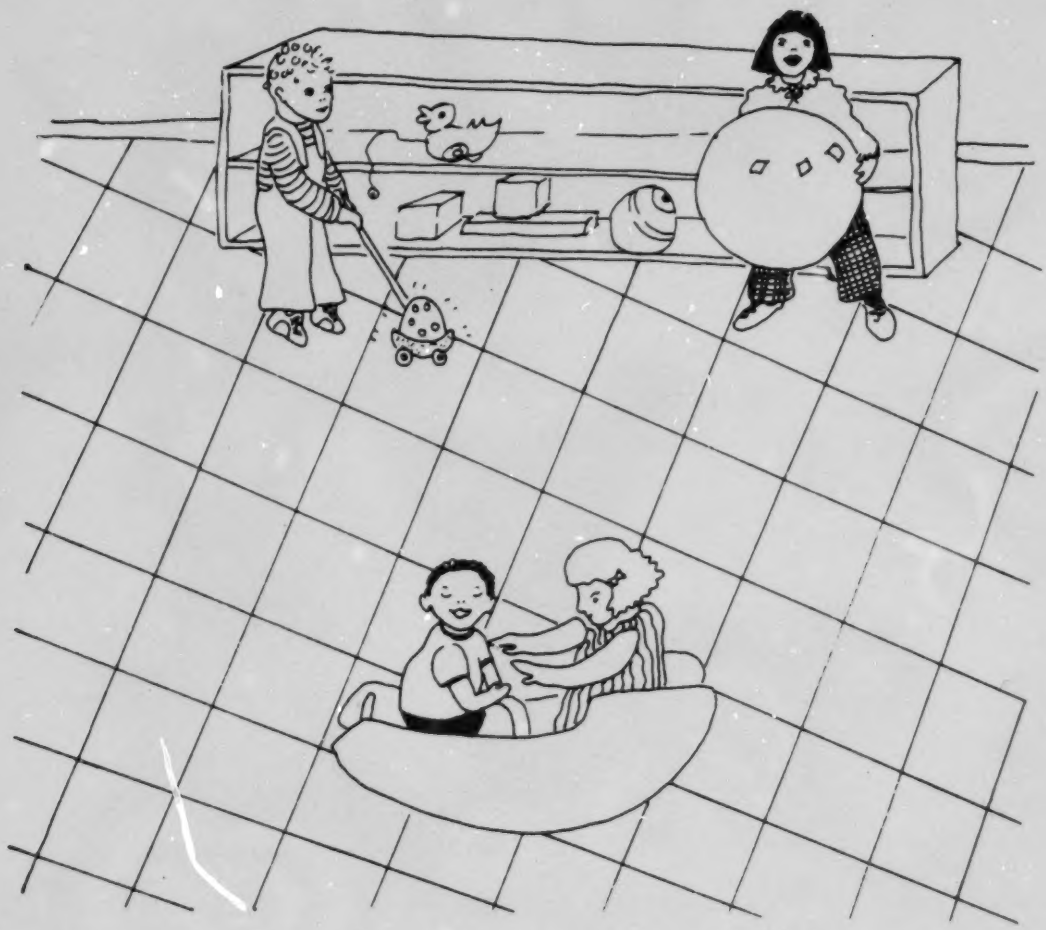
Get rid of clutter. Storage which is out of the children's reach is helpful. This way you can put a few new toys out and put some others away for a while. Children can find different things to play with on different days without being overwhelmed by too much to choose from at any one time.

MAKE ROOM FOR ACTIVE PLAY



Pretoddlers, with their growing bodies and exploring minds, are on the move much of the time. They need plenty of room for active play. A safely fenced outdoor environment is particularly suitable. Open areas with soft surfaces like grass or sawdust can be used for walking, running, dancing and some good old-fashioned crawling. Small hills are fun to climb up and walk or roll down. Children can use wheeled toys on hard surfaces like asphalt or cement. A broad path which gently curves around the play yard is best. Here children can use kiddie cars, doll carriages, carts, wagons and push-pull toys. Fewer difficulties arise when these roadways are wide enough to allow pretoddlers to pass each other easily. These paths also should be located a short distance from other play areas. A paved path, for example, is best when it is more than a child's throwing distance from the sandbox. One part of the yard might include "loose parts" like hollow blocks and light-weight boxes for pretoddlers to use in their active play.

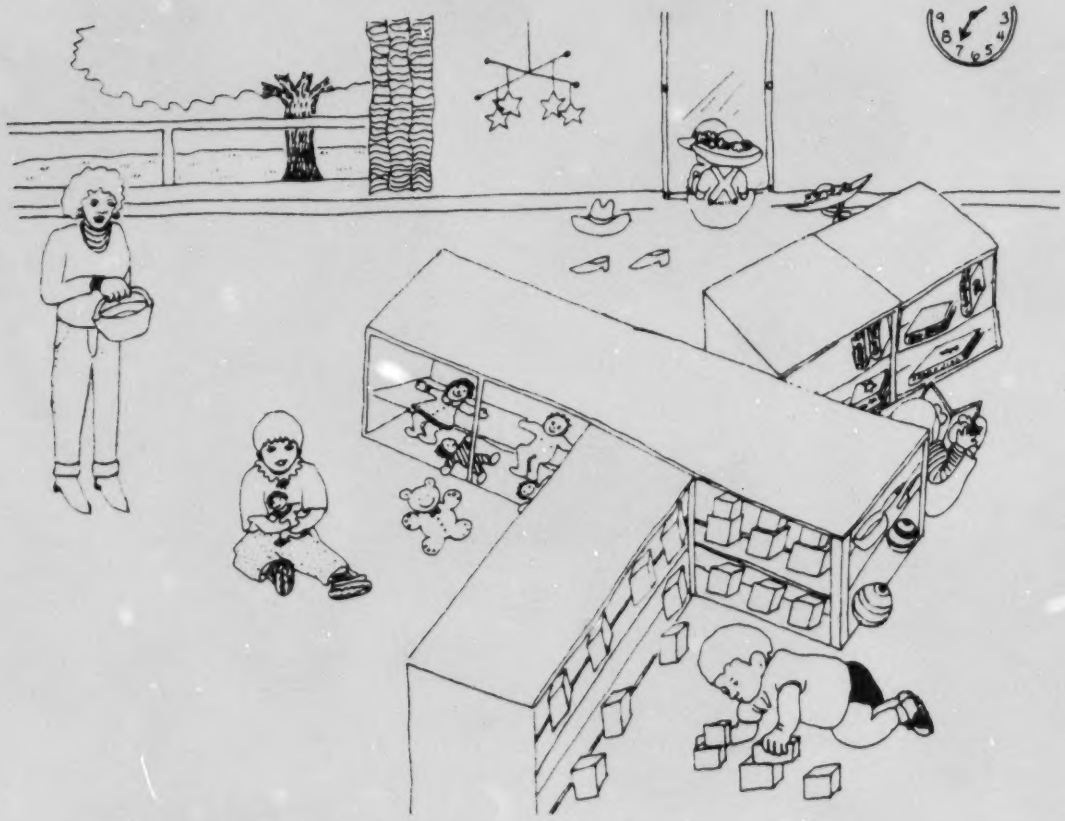
Expect pretoddlers to be active indoors as well as outdoors. Indoor environments reflect the needs of pretoddlers when there is plenty of open space for movement. Low-pile carpeting provides a non-slip surface to practice walking forward, backward and sideway. A hard-surfaced area indoors provides for other kinds of active play. On it pretoddlers can run, jump, ride kiddie cars or use push-pull toys. Active play is usually noisy play. So if you have a quiet area for looking at books, locate it away from an active play area. Moveable shelves and dividers allow caregivers to change the shape and size of areas to fit the needs of a particular group of children.



CREATE SOME PARTLY-ENCLOSED SPACES

Shelters, covered porches and trees help increase the time children can spend outdoors. Extreme weather conditions should be the only reason for not taking pretoddlers outside every day. The most natural use of the outdoor environment is for active play. But nearly everything that happens indoors also can take place outdoors. Convenient outdoor storage makes it easier to support the kinds of play pretoddlers like. Small, partly-enclosed areas encourage different kinds of quiet play. Nooks and crannies should be arranged so the children can store their collections of objects and toys. Areas should be available where children can practice filling and emptying containers. The outdoor environment is a good place for sand and water play and digging in the dirt. Caregivers can have much to show and talk about with pretoddlers if the outdoor environment includes special interest areas, like a fenced area for animals or a space where grass, trees and flowers grow. The outdoor environment can be planned so that there are interesting things to do in addition to walking, running, climbing, jumping and sliding.

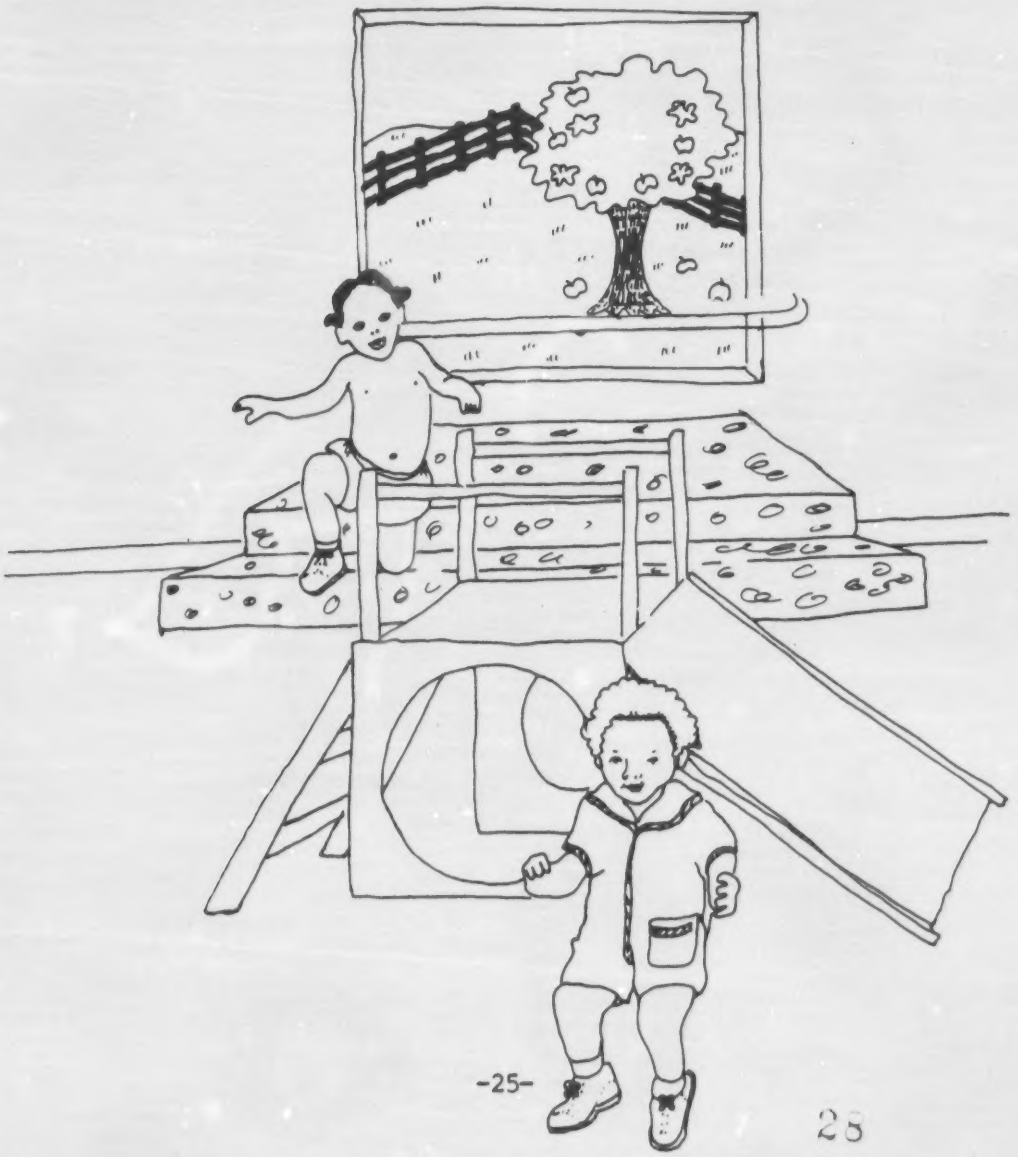
Pretoddlers need plenty of open space to practice walking. But it is not always easy to keep open space free of clutter. As soon as these young children are walking securely, they like to carry objects or toys as they move about. Like little squirrels, they like to make collections of the things they gather. If there is no suitable place to put their toys, pretoddlers will pile them anywhere. This includes the middle of any open space. With toys scattered here and there, the open spaces are no longer open. Pretoddlers who have to step over toys are not free to practice movement. There is a plan that helps to keep toys from filling open spaces. An island of low shelves arranged in the center of the room provides places for collections of toys. Nooks and crannies result from an irregular placement of shelves. The children can stack their collections in these places. This helps keep the open spaces open.



PROVIDE LOTS OF CLIMBING OPPORTUNITIES

A variety of ways for pretoddlers to practice climbing can be built into the outdoor environment. Pretoddlers can climb small, grass-covered hills and then run, slide or roll down. Play units can have different ways to climb. A ramp can lead from one level to another. Short steps can take a child to a low platform. A ladder can lead to a low slide. Natural parts of the environment like rocks, logs or trees can add opportunities for climbing. Some play units combine more than one feature. Children can climb up and over a large drainage pipe with earth mounded on top. Or they can climb into the tunnel which the pipe forms. Other things for climbing into might include a sandbox, tire or barrel. Children also like crawling into out-of-the-way spaces near bushes or under stairways.

Pretoddlers like to climb up and into things. The indoor environment can be planned to offer a variety of climbing experiences. A few carpeted steps may lead up to a small platform by a protected window. A room may have different levels with carpeted stairs or a ramp leading from one level to the other. Steps may take a child to the top of a small play unit. Carpeted steps to the diapering table can let the children have the fun of climbing while saving a caregiver's back. Close supervision and a caregiver's helping hand make this a safe arrangement. Play platforms a few feet off the floor also have the feature of providing space underneath. Children like to crawl into these small spaces. Pillows or carpet scraps can add to the appeal of these tiny areas. Spaces to crawl into may not have been built into the environment. But they can be made by rearranging furniture. They can be found under platforms and stairs. They can be added with boxes, large doll beds, packing barrels or blankets for tents.



SAVE STEPS BY GOOD PLANNING OF ROUTINE CARE

With this age group, caregivers devote lots of time each day to routine care. Besides greeting and talking with parents, caregivers must help these young children get through the routines of eating, diapering and napping. A well-planned environment reduces the number of steps required to get through a specific task. An open environment is a great help to caregivers. It allows them to see and supervise other children from any area.

Well-planned areas help caregivers and children:

Receiving Space and furnishing can set off an area near the main entry for parents and their children to come and go. As everyone arrives they should be able to see into the room. Yet arriving children and their parents should be separate from the main play areas. A small gate or moveable barrier also will keep the little ones away from the door.

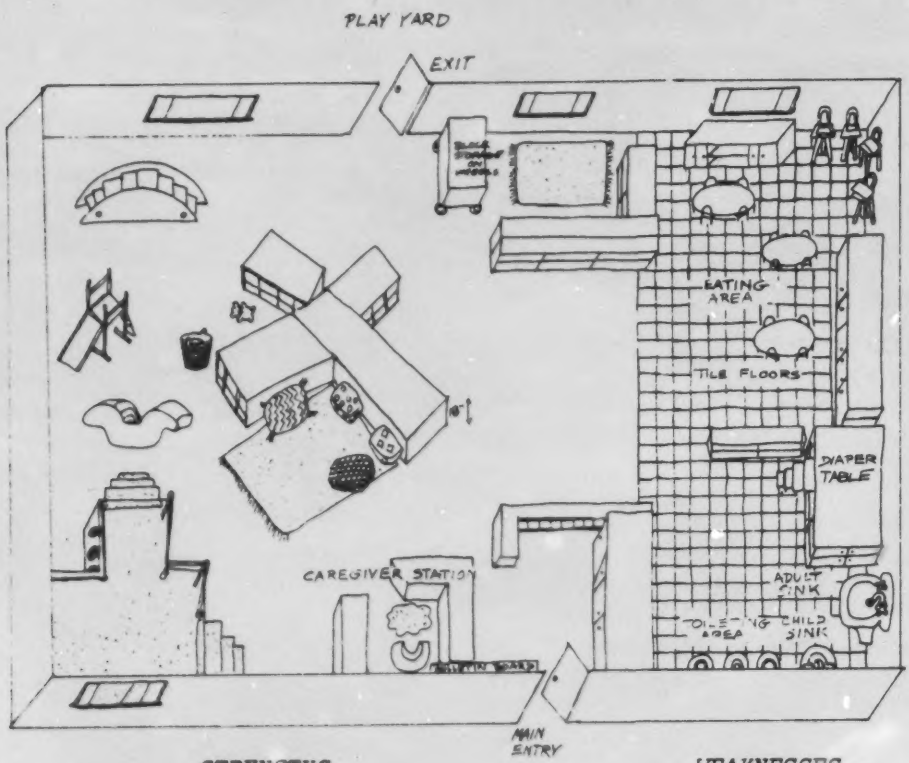
Eating Snacks and meals can be served at low tables with child-sized chairs. Booster seats right on the floor are just right for pretoddlers. Small groups of four to six children at a table work best. You may need some high chairs for the children who do not eat independently. The eating area should be located near the kitchen and have a washable floor surface.

Diapering This area should be near the main play areas but clearly separate. Partial walls allow a view in and out of this area. An adult-height diapering table and sink are needed. Other conveniences include storage for diapers and extra clothing and easy disposal or storage of soiled diapers. For the occasional pretoddler who is seeking independence, a child-sized toilet is nice.

Napping In some centers napping occurs in a separate room. As the children awaken at different times, caregivers must cope with supervising children sleeping in one room and others playing elsewhere. It is not always necessary to have napping in another place. Surprising as it may seem, this age group is able to sleep just as well in a well-lit room next to other activities.

TAKE A LOOK AT ONE INDOOR PRETODDLER ROOM

This plan shows a pretoddler care area. The children have access to another large indoor space for active play and naps. There is an outdoor play area nearby. See if you can spot the strong and weak points of this room. Compare your thoughts with those listed below.



STRENGTHS

irregular arrangement of shelves makes good nooks for "collecting" toys

climbing and active play equipment well spaced

steps up to diaper table reduce lifting

receiving area near main entry safe for pretoddlers and convenient for parents

carpeted stairs and floors safe for pretoddlers' play

cushions and rug make "soft" zones

small groups of children can eat together

WEAKNESSES

diapering area too far from main play areas and too near eating area

adult-sized chair where caregiver can sit to hold a child would be nice

nap area not in main room, requires separate supervision

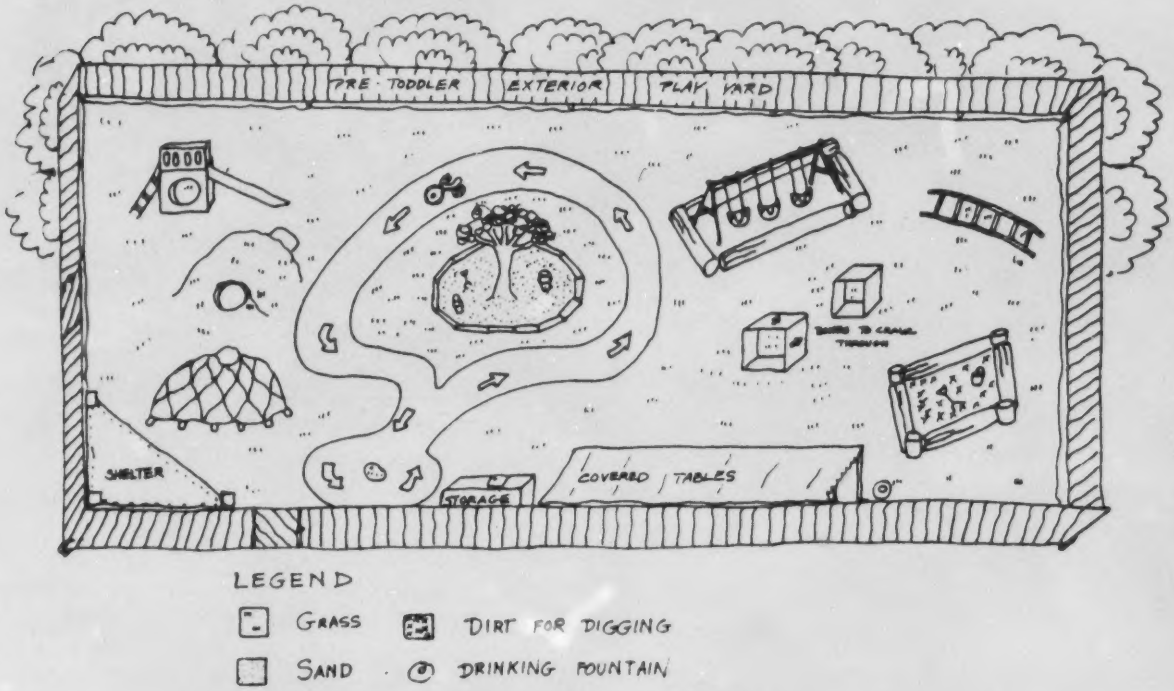
more windows to outside would be nice

replace one set of stairs to loft with ramp for variety

no sink in eating area

TAKE A LOOK AT ONE OUTDOOR PLAY AREA

The plan below shows a pretoddler outdoor play space. See if you can spot its strong and weak points. Compare your thoughts about its strengths and weaknesses with those listed below.



STRENGTHS

easy to see into all corners to supervise children at play

both paved and grassy areas

covered tables, tree and corner shelter provide shade and protection from weather

logs around swings and sandbox protect those play areas

climbing toys, boxes and tunnels provide different levels

convenient outdoor storage

covered climber provides "get away" spot

outdoor water source

WEAKNESSES

play yard not connected to center building for easy in/out

dividing space into areas or zones linked together would add interest

not enough places to "get away" or find a private spot

not many "natural areas" in the play yard

paved path should lead to storage for wheeled toys, without crossing the grass

need more than one hill or mound for variety

CHECK YOUR CENTER'S PRETODDLER PLAY SPACES

Use the checklist below to help you look at and think about your center's pretoddler play areas. Think about ways to provide areas and opportunities for play which your center may not have.

ORGANIZATION OF PLAY YARD

____ easy access to outside from indoor playroom

____ play spaces linked to each other, offering a choice of both active and quiet play activities

____ open spaces for active movement

____ opportunities for pretoddlers to see children of different ages

____ some play areas attractive to older or more skilled children and some attractive to younger or less skilled children

____ bushes, shelters, porches or other barriers to protect play areas from winter winds and extreme summer suns

____ play units spaced and located to avoid crowding and accidents

____ active play areas near each other and away from quiet play areas

____ bushes, tires, logs, low hills or other barriers to partly enclose some spaces

____ clear visibility into all areas of the play yard

____ convenient storage for outdoor equipment

____ boxes, tents or tunnels for one child to "get away"

____ opportunities for caregivers and children to change things by moving dividers, boards or boxes

____ outdoor water source

____ child-proof fences and gates

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE

____ paved play areas or wide pathways for kiddie cars and wheeled toys

____ open grassy or soft-surface play areas for walking, running, sitting or crawling

____ sand, dirt and water play areas for filling and dumping

____ play areas with small "loose parts" such as boxes and hollow blocks

____ play areas at different levels - platforms, tunnels, low hills or mounds and rocks

Turn page please.

ORGANIZATION OF INDOOR SPACE

____ space for greeting parents and children near main entry

____ cubby/space for diaper bag ____ a place to hang coats

____ a variety of spaces linked together, offering a choice of active or quiet play (activities)

____ open space for active movement

____ small activity spaces for one to three children, plus possibly a caregiver

____ "get away" or private spaces for one pretoddler

____ clear pathways to exits and between different areas in the room

____ all areas are spaced to prevent crowding and accidents

____ child-height storage and open shelves near play areas

____ nooks and crannies for toy "collections"

____ out-of-reach storage for supplies, materials

____ hard and soft floor coverings in different parts of the area

____ crib/sleeping area

____ diapering/toileting area near main activity areas

____ eating area near kitchen

INDOOR ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE

____ low play units for climbing and sliding

____ smooth-surfaced areas for kiddie cars and push-pull toys

____ a variety of toys on open, child-height shelves

____ simple, child-sized kitchen and bedroom furnishings with dolls

____ sand table ____ water play ____ messy materials like play dough

Some of the ideas and concepts in this section are adapted from Cohen, U., Hill, A. B., Lane, C. G., McGinty, T., & Moore, G. T., *Recommendations For Child Play Areas*, and Moore, G. T., Lane, C. G., Hill, A. B., Cohen, U., & McGinty, T., *Recommendations For Child Care Centers*. Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Center for Architecture and Urban Planning Research, 1979.

MAKING CENTER SPACES LIVEABLE

ENCOURAGE EXPLORATION WITH VARIETY

The best environments for pretoddlers allow children to explore, to use their imaginations and to move and change things. The value of toys and play units is not their original cost but how often and how long pretoddlers play with them. Whatever equipment you may have, look for ways to add interest and improve the quality of play for the pretoddlers in your care. All toys, equipment and play units should present a challenge without too great a risk to the children's safety. Remember, pretoddlers need to be on the move in order to learn. These children usually do not find interesting things to do while sitting in playpens, high chairs or cribs.

Look for ways to encourage movement and learning in the pretoddler environment:

Expect experimentation. Expect and show that you approve of a pretoddler's natural curiosity - as long as no one is being harmed by another's play. Pretoddlers are trying to learn all they can about the world. They do this by using their toys in many different ways. They hit them against the floor or a table. They throw them. They look at them. They feel them. They put toys in and take them out of containers.

Look for more than one use. Climbers, platforms, rocks or a section of drainage pipe which can be used in different ways allow for choice and different kinds of play. These play structures are preferred over those built to look like one thing, such as a turtle or rocket.

Have some "loose parts" to move about. Add opportunities for moving and changing things in both the indoor and outdoor play areas. Pretoddlers can use a few small boxes and hollow blocks to make simple changes in their play environment.

Give pretoddlers more than one way out. Play units that have more than one way up or down are best. A slide built on a small hill or with a platform gives a child another way out if sliding down doesn't look like fun from the top of the slide.

CREATE A CHEERFUL ATMOSPHERE

An important concern is the look and feel of the center environment. The goal is to make the center as "homey" as possible. Sometimes this is a real challenge. Color and lighting can do a lot to help create a cheery feeling. A carefully selected combination of light shades of yellow, orange, blue or green usually is appealing. Most people find the warm colors like red, orange and yellow exciting. So active play areas and entry ways are good places to use orange and other bright colors. People find that the cool colors like blue, green and purple are relaxing. Use blue or light green in areas for quiet play. Large rooms look smaller with the walls or part of each wall painted a different color or shade of the same color. Toys are easier to see on shelves that are a neutral color. A blue toy on a blue shelf is hard to find.

Here are some ways to use color and lighting to good advantages:

Add some color. Hang posters, pictures or large sheets of colored paper for color and variety. Pretoddlers look mostly at the bottom third of a wall. So keep decorations that you hang for them low.

Let fabrics cheer up the room. Colorful fabrics can help cheer up a room. Bring more color into your room with pillow coverings, curtains and banners.

Keep it simple. Be careful to avoid using too many colors or decorations. Choose just a few accent colors. Leave some walls free of decorations. The confusion of too much color and too many things to look at can over-excite some children.

Let lighting help. Use a light to feature an area or activity. Hanging a lamp over an area varies the lighting in the room and sets that area off as special. If your room has flourescent lights, choose special times to turn off the lights. At snack time, for example, this will reduce glare and help change everyone's mood.

MAKE PRETODDLER AREAS SOFT AND HOMELIKE

Often centers are unable to provide as many textures and soft surfaces as children have in their own homes. Upholstered furniture and soft toys covered with fuzzy fabrics are hard to keep clean. So the smooth, hard surfaces of plastic, vinyl, formica, tile and linoleum are used. Often, to protect the health of the children, centers must exclude toys and textures that make for comfort and coziness. Health regulations are important. But there are things that can make the center a softer place to be, with cozy spaces and soft playthings. Some soft things children can do include sitting in a caregiver's lap, using finger paints, molding play dough, digging in the dirt and playing in sand or water.

Softness and a variety of textures belong in the center environment:

Texture walks Children, with shoes off, can walk on a board or small area of the room covered with different textures. Mix high and low-pile carpet samples for variety.

Textures outdoors Children can find many soft surfaces outside. These include grass, sand, dirt, water, straw and sawdust. A blanket spread on the ground makes a soft place to sit.

Fabrics Use fabrics in a variety of ways to add softness. Fabrics make washable pillow covers. Curtains can add softness while helping to control natural light. Doll blankets and scarves are nice in a variety of textures. Fabrics can be used to make "touch and feel" books.

Carpeting Use your imagination and find ways to use carpet pieces, scraps and samples. Sew several sample squares together for a small area rug. Glue carpeting to a packing barrel to make a cozy private place. Put carpet squares around the room so children can sit on them while playing.

Low ceilings are more inviting than high ceilings. Fishnet, fabric or old parachutes can be draped the full length of a room which has high ceilings. Fabric absorbs sound, as well as adding interest to a room. Avoid blocking sprinkler systems.

ADD LIVING THINGS TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Plants and animals add beauty, interest and softness to any environment. Living things will make your center more inviting. Houseplants can be located in different parts of a room. You can hang them from the ceiling or place them securely on shelves and windowsills. The pretoddlers in your room can help with the care and watering of these plants. Also they can help you plant seeds in the spring and bulbs in the fall. Health rules may prevent you from having pets in your center. Check with your director. If permitted, small animals like gerbils, guinea pigs, rabbits and hamsters make good pets. The children will learn by your example how to treat animals gently. A fenced area for small animals in the play yard increases the opportunities for lots of contact between children and animals. Fish are popular pets and pretoddlers like to watch them swim about. Keep the fish at child's eye level while preventing toys from being dropped into the tank. Pretoddlers cannot be as directly involved in the care and feeding of plants and animals as older children, but they do benefit from having as much contact with other living things as possible.

Use animals and plants to create interest and add beauty:

Keep it safe. Some houseplants are poisonous. Be sure to use only safe plants in your center. Pretoddlers look straight ahead more than up. If you want them to enjoy hanging plants, hang the plants much lower than for adult viewing but out of a child's reach. Keep plants on shelves and windowsills beyond reach also.

Invite bugs and birds. Trees, bushes, flowers, grass, bird feeders and birdbaths will encourage little creatures to visit your play yard. A pretoddler will watch a crawling insect with great interest.

Bring in animals. Most children like to touch small animals like rabbits or hamsters. If you don't have pets in your center, invite someone to bring an animal for a short visit. Willing visitors might include parents, zookeepers or humane society workers.

CHECK YOUR CENTER FOR SOFTNESS AND LIVEABILITY

Check your center's indoor and outdoor space. Score one point for each item you check on the list below.

SOFTNESS

____ rocker
____ stuffed chair
____ lawn swing
____ bean bag chair
____ large carpet or rug
____ floor cushions
____ grass
____ sandbox or sand area
____ soft animal to hold
____ soft seats on swings
____ finger paints
____ clay or play dough
____ mud
____ water added to sand
____ "laps"
____ dirt for digging*

LIVEABILITY

____ The center environment is bright and cheery, including the paint on the walls.

____ Posters, decorations and pictures are large, colorful, simple and at child's eye level.

____ Decorations and colors are planned carefully and arranged to avoid too many colors and too much confusion.

____ Lighting is directed at certain activities or areas and controlled to change moods.

____ Children are encouraged to experiment with toys and use them in more than one way as long as the activity is not harming anyone.

____ Children can move objects while they play.

____ The center feels "homelike" with curtains, plants and areas for comfort and getting away.

____ Play units can be used in more than one way.

____ TOTAL POINTS

19-24 Keep up the good work!
11-18 There's room for changes that will improve your center's liveability.
0-10 Look for ways to add some of the items you didn't check.

*These items are suggested in a *softness* rating taken from Elizabeth Prescott's *Assessment Of Child-Rearing Environments: An Ecological Approach*. California: Pacific Oaks College, 1975.

ADDING THE HUMAN TOUCH TO CENTER ENVIRONMENTS

PART TWO

In PART TWO you will discover:

. tips for managing the pretoddler environment

. ways to support personal and individual differences

. toys and activities that pretoddlers like

. creative ways to plan for pretoddlers

. some suggested books and records

MANAGING PRETODDLER ENVIRONMENTS

KEEP PRETODDLER GROUP SIZE SMALL

For pretoddlers both group size and the number of children for each adult in the room need to be considered. In small groups caregivers talk and play more with the children than they do in large groups. Pretoddlers in larger groups fuss more and spend more time wandering aimlessly. The total number of children grouped together in one center play area makes a big difference in the quality of the child care experience. Children in two groups of ten with two caregivers in each group play better than one group of 20 with four caregivers. The number of caregivers to children is another important factor. The best care usually occurs when there is one caregiver for every four to five children. A small group size and enough adults for the number of children are the keys to quality child care.

Look for ways to keep group size small:

Try dividing a room. A center with a lot of children in one large area might try dividing the space. The result would be two or more areas with groups just the right size. Remodeling or adding partitions are the best solutions. When this isn't possible, there are other ways to divide an area. Shelves and curtains or banners can be used together to divide a large space. Careful planning may be necessary to arrange for sharing diapering areas, sinks and eating areas.

Try using sub-groups. Another solution to the problem of a large group is to divide it into smaller groups. One caregiver stays in one area with a group. Another caregiver takes a group to an indoor play space elsewhere in the center or to the outdoor play yard.

Try finding volunteers. Some centers are very successful at finding and using volunteers. Having an extra adult on a regular basis can increase the number of adults per children and help increase the opportunities for these young children to talk and play with one adult.

THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN ROLE

It may help you plan for each day if you give some thought to how you spend your time. Sometimes you will want to allow the pretoddlers in your room to play, explore and learn on their own. At other times you will want to play with or lead an activity with one child or a small group. The key is finding the balance between interfering too much with a child's play or not enough. Pretoddlers, like other children and adults, need a change of pace. This may happen more easily in their home environments. At home there is not the activity and excitement of a group of children. In a group setting, caregivers can play a game or direct an activity when a child is bored, over-excited or upset. This way caregivers can help one or several children change from one behavior or kind of play to another. Another reason for direct involvement is to help a child learn. Pretoddlers learn a great deal from their play. Understanding adults can help pretoddlers learn problem solving and language, as well as the joy of sharing and human contact.

Work for a balance in how much you direct your pretoddlers everyday:

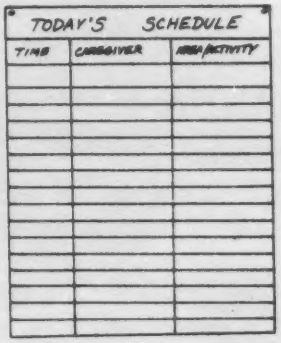
Free-choice Much of the pretoddler's day will be a time when you give little direction. You set out some toys and arrange the play space. As the children choose what to do, you watch and are available to help a child as the need arises. Usually, the adult is not directly involved during times of free-choice play.

Activity with one child While involved in an activity with one child, you direct your attention to that child. You sing a song, talk about pictures in a book or build blocks. Skilled caregivers learn to play with one young child while still keeping an eye on other pretoddlers.

Small group activity With pretoddlers caregivers only direct *small* groups for *short* periods of time. This means no more than four or five children for no more than five minutes at a time. Caregivers must be able to direct total attention to the activity which may be dancing or telling a flannel board story.

CREATE ORDER WITH A REGULAR SCHEDULE

A regular routine helps young children feel secure. A daily schedule organizes the day for adults. Then each caregiver knows what specific things they are to do and when to do them. It helps if the schedule is posted in clear view of all adults in the room. We are not suggesting that you organize each child's day minute by minute. The schedule is designed to make sure that someone is always supervising play areas. Then children are free to choose where and when to play. With adult-directed activities included as a part of each day, the children can choose to take part in those things that look interesting. Carefully worked out plans for moving from one area or activity to the next make getting through the day easier. Moving just a few children at a time reduces the time one child has to spend waiting for others. It allows caregivers to give individual attention to each pretoddler.



Below is a sample schedule for a pretoddler room. If your center is open more hours, you will want to add to this schedule. You may have to be flexible to allow for a child who needs a morning nap:

0630-0800	arrival, free play and breakfast, diaper check
0800-0900	free play, caregiver-directed activities diaper check
0900-0930	snack served in shifts
0930-1030	outdoor play, diaper check
1030-1130	small group activities, quiet play, diaper check
1130-1230	lunch served in shifts, diaper check
1150-1430	nap, children get up as they awaken, diaper check
1430-1530	outdoor, free-choice play, diaper check
1530-1600	snack served in shifts, diaper check
1600-1730	free play, caregiver-directed activities, diaper check
1730-1800	dinner

PLAN FOR PRETODDLER ROUTINES

While caring for pretoddlers you will want to plan ahead for getting through the routines of each day. Pretoddlers are more independent than infants, but they need your help with coats and hats when it's time to go outside. Regularly diapering each child in a group takes considerable time. If there are specific plans for handling routine tasks, you will spend less time and have fewer frustrations managing eating, napping and other routines. This means you will have more time for talking to and playing with the pretoddlers in your care.

Plan efficient ways to handle routines:

Make plans for diapering. Pretoddlers still in diapers are most comfortable when checked every hour. You will want a system to ensure that all children are checked each time.

Make a plan for getting indoors and out. Exactly how you get from one place to another will depend on the number of pretoddlers and caregivers in your room. Moving a few children at a time works best. Allow time for the children to cooperate and participate in putting on and taking off their hats, coats, boots and mittens.

Make a plan for snacks and mealtimes. Most pretoddlers are eager to eat so be prepared ahead of time by knowing your center's routines and your duties. Before it is time to serve food to pretoddlers, make a quick check to see that everything you need is ready, including sponges and mops for cleaning up spills.

Have a plan for napping. Following a regular routine makes it easier for pretoddlers to know that it is time to settle down for sleep. They will go to sleep more promptly and with less fussing if the nap area is ready for them when they are ready to nap.

Have a plan for receiving parents. It is wise if one specific caregiver at a time has the duty of greeting pretoddlers and parents. Keeping track of the expected return time of the parents is helpful. This way diaper bags are ready and necessary information can be relayed quickly between caregivers and parents.

MANAGE DIAPERING IN A POSITIVE WAY

Most, if not all, of the pretoddlers in your care will be in diapers. For most children learning independent toileting skills will come much later. You may see children gaining an awareness of *wet* or *dry* and you can encourage behavior that shows a desire to learn toileting skills. During a routine diaper check, a child might feel her own diaper and say, "Dry." Check the diaper and say, "Yes, you are dry." Then give a big hug. Caregivers should know and follow their center's diapering routines. A workable plan is to have a caregiver assigned to the diapering area at regular intervals - approximately every hour. The other caregivers can send one pretoddler at a time for a diaper change. It is important to wipe the diapering surface and wash hands carefully after each diaper change. This is also a good time to wipe each child's hands and face and offer a drink of water.

Here are some ways to manage toileting positively:

Keep diapering safe. Have everything you need before lifting a child to the diapering surface. *Never* leave a child unattended. If pins are used, keep them out of the child's reach. Avoid setting the example of putting pins in your mouth while changing a child.

Keep diaper bags handy. There should be adequate storage for each pretoddler's diapers and dry clothes *in* this area.

Keep records. Fill in all charts that your center maintains. Parents may be especially interested in keeping track of diapering results. Some centers make a health check each morning during the first diapering period.

Keep a supply of extra clothing. You will need to keep a supply of extra clothing for pretoddlers. Even when parents are asked to bring extra clothing, you still need an emergency supply of diapers, underpants, pants and shirts.

Use diapering time to give individual attention. A convenient, efficiently arranged diapering area allows for and encourages caregivers to use this time for talking to, touching and giving personal attention to each pretoddler in the group.

SERVE FOOD IN A RELAXED SETTING

Carefully thought out routines will help make snacks and meals the positive experiences they should be for both caregivers and pretoddlers. Children use snack and mealtime to satisfy their hunger. Caregivers can use this time for other purposes, such as developing language. This happens best in small groups of four or five pretoddlers with one adult. This way each child can receive attention. Staggering the eating schedule makes small groups possible. Some eat while others are busy elsewhere. Pretoddlers find it easier to eat after a quiet, calm activity or period of time. Remember, the more pretoddlers can do for themselves, the better for you and for them. Soft foods easily eaten with spoons and bits of food that can be eaten with fingers are best. Know and follow your center's routine for handling children's allergies and recording what food is eaten.

Consider the different needs of the pretoddlers in your room when serving food:

The youngest need more help. The youngest pretoddlers, 13 to 18 months, may require more help. For this reason, some high chairs belong in your pretoddler room. Then you can help a child who hasn't learned to manage a spoon and cup independently. Cups with two handles and weighted bottoms to prevent tipping are best. Always encourage a child to practice using a spoon, even if you have to help now and then.

Help the oldest towards independence. Pretoddlers from 19 to 24 months usually are able to eat their snacks and meals fairly independently. For these children, you can use low tables with booster seats on the floor for chairs. They will manage spoons and cups with little difficulty. Encourage these children to help clear the table and throw away trash. Learning to eat and clean up independently helps both you and these young children.

Keep your hands clean. Wash your hands before serving food. You can pick up germs by handling a child's used plate or cup. Always use a spatula, scoop or serving spoon to serve food. Use tongs or a piece of plastic wrap for picking up bread. Wash your hands often when preparing and serving food.

KEEP PRETODDLER NAP TIME FLEXIBLE

Pretoddlers need a nap everyday. Indeed, some may need more than one nap a day. Plan for the children who require more sleep or for a child who has a low-energy day. Some flexibility is needed to allow for naps both in the morning and after lunch. Many children in your care will do nicely with one long, afternoon nap. Some pretoddlers may resist sleeping. But with patient yet firm guidance and a regular routine, most young children will settle down to sleep quickly and easily. A good routine is to have a child or two go from lunch to the diapering area. A caregiver can check diapers and help with washing hands and faces and brushing teeth. From there the children can go directly to their cribs or low cots. In some centers, the pretoddlers play in a quiet place for a few minutes before they settle down. Whatever your specific routine, the key is to have a few children settling down at one time. In some centers, caregivers have found that a regular nap-time routine helps children settle down better than anything else. In centers which provide drop-in care, children who are not familiar with the routine may need special help from a caregiver. As each pretoddler wakes up, let the child get up. After a diaper check, the child is free to play in another area.

Here are some hints to help you plan and manage pretoddler nap time:

Stagger and space the beds. Pretoddlers seem to settle down better when their cribs or cots are staggered instead of in even rows. Keep them three feet apart all the way around.

Put pretoddlers head-to-toe. It helps pretoddlers fall asleep faster if you put them head-to-toe on their beds instead of having all heads pointing in the same direction.

Check the environment for softness. Your center probably has regular routines for such things as darkening the room or playing soft music. Make sure your voice, movements and manner are firm, but calm and restful. It is not appropriate for caregivers to whisper and chat while supervising the nap area.

Follow health routines. Follow your center's routines for disinfecting the cots or cribs after each nap time.

ARRANGE MATERIALS FOR BEST USE

You can expect some clutter in a space full of active pretoddlers. The trick is to plan ways that will help reduce some of the confusion and disorder. In a pretoddler area, the upper part of the walls can be used for storage. Shelves and closets allow you to keep extra toys and supplies out of sight. Chests with hinged lids are dangerous and not recommended for use with young children. As a caregiver, you probably will find that you have more interest in keeping things in order than the children. However, if you make clean-up time a fun routine, you might even see the day when a child puts a toy back on a shelf after playing with it. Picture labels which show where toys belong on a shelf are especially helpful to new caregivers. This way each toy can be returned easily to its place. The very oldest pretoddlers may discover how to match a toy with its picture or shape on a shelf.

Plan ways to arrange the materials in your room:

Baskets make good toy containers. Sturdy baskets located in different parts of the play space may help you keep the pretoddler area in order. You can help children learn to sort by putting all the puppets in one basket and balls in another.

Have some toys on open shelves. Pretoddlers like to find their own toys where they can reach them on low, open shelves. Arrange the toys neatly, avoiding the clutter of too many things too close together.

Put out different toys. Young children like a variety of different experiences. But it is not a good idea to put all of your toys out at once. Wise caregivers put some toys in storage for a while and bring out a few different ones.

Put some toys high. A useful way to store a few toys is to hang them on the wall or put them up high. Pretoddlers will learn to ask for a toy they want. Adults can help remind the children of these toys. A caregiver can ask, "Shawn, do you want to ride a kiddie car?" Then the caregiver hands the toy to the child.

BE FLEXIBLE IF YOUR CENTER PROVIDES DROP-IN CARE

Drop-in refers to providing child care with no advance reservations required. Parents may arrive at any time to drop off or pick up their children. This calls for flexible caregivers who can adjust to change as the children come and go. Careful planning helps. As additional caregivers are called in, you will need an easy, efficient plan for assigning and sharing duties. It may help to know attendance trends. Your director may be able to share this information with you. Military child care centers often find payday one of the busiest days each month.

Careful planning helps to meet the challenge of drop-in care:

Name tags help. Children feel more at home and respond better if you can use their names. Name tags help. Masking tape name tags are quick and easy to make. Children cannot remove the name tags if they are taped to their backs. Be aware that it is easy for the children to pull name tags off each other. If this is a problem, a chart with names and descriptions of the children can be a great help.

Expect some upset. Usually, it is the pretoddler under 18 months of age who is the most upset by separation from a parent or parents. Caregivers can help by getting down to the child's level or holding the child for a few minutes. Comforting words and helping a child to locate interesting things to do or play may help.

Have a supervision plan. As pretoddlers and caregivers come and go, you will want a plan to follow. Work out a plan in advance, dividing the duties by areas or activities. This way each caregiver knows exactly what to do or where to supervise.

Check entries and exits. An easy check-in and check-out system helps you keep track of the pretoddlers as they come and go. On the next page, you will find a description of a sample daily chart for a pretoddler room.

KEEP TRACK OF THE PRETODDLERS AS THEY COME AND GO

If your center provides drop-in care, caregivers need a way to keep track of the children assigned to their area. The *official* entry and exit records, health cards, emergency phone numbers and fees charged usually are kept elsewhere in the child care center. But it is important *in your own area* to have a system for keeping track of the pretoddlers as they come and go. A chart serves as a central, convenient source of information for both caregivers and parents.

Chart each name, the time in, the parent's expected return time and the following:

Description/clothing Pretoddlers may lose their name tags. For quick identification of children new to you or for new caregivers, jot down special colors or types of clothing.

Diapering In this space keep track of who has been checked or diapered each hour. Using different colors for each check is helpful. Also you can note the color or description of each child's diaper bag here.

Feeding A code, "B" for breakfast, "L" for lunch and "D" for dinner, tells at a glance which center-prepared meals the children will eat. An "S" indicates a sack meal from home. A caregiver can make special notes about what and how the child ate in the space to the right.

Sleeping All pretoddlers nap unless a parent requests otherwise or plans to pick up the pretoddler before nap time. An "O" in the nap column means no nap.

Remarks This column is for communication between parents and caregivers. A parent may request results of diapering. Or a parent may report a pretoddler's special likes and dislikes. A caregiver may want to note a child's special accomplishment or a difficult moment experienced that day.

Below is a sample daily chart used in a military child care center where many children are cared for on a drop-in basis. The chart is designed both to keep track of the changing enrollment and to be reusable. The chart is covered with clear plastic and marked with a washable marking pen or wax pencil. As each child arrives, a caregiver enters a name and other details. As each child leaves, the name and information are erased.

A SAMPLE DAILY CHART FOR A PRETODDLER ROOM

#	Pretoddler's Name	Time In	Description/ Clothing	Diapering	Feeding		Sleeping		Expected Return	Remarks
					Meals	Remarks	Nap	Slept Well		
1	Manuel Riggs	0730	blue shorts	wet BM ✓✓	B L	B ✓	✓		1430	
2	Cindy Hoh	0745	red jumpsuit	shake BM ✓	B L	B G	✓		1500	getting new tooth
3	Chelsea Jordan	0800	green playsuit	BM ✓	L		✓		1430	
4	Heather Elkins	0800	brown playsuit	green pleasant BM ✓✓	C		C		1100	watch for diaper rash
5	Charlie Riggs	0830	maroon shirt & shorts	brown BM ✓	L		✓		1300	

Parents often base their opinion of the center on what they see and hear during the few minutes when they are dropping off or picking up a child. So how caregivers set up the receiving area and manage the entry and exit routines is particularly important.

LET PRETODDLERS HELP WITH DAILY ROUTINES

With careful planning the pretoddlers in your care can have a chance to help you with some of your everyday routines. This can happen when you think of ways to share your chores with the children instead of just hurrying through them. Let the pretoddlers do the kinds of things they might be able to try in their daily lives at home. Pretoddlers have fun while learning this way. This also makes it easier for you to fill the day with meaningful learning experiences for the children. Just remember pretoddlers do not work with the speed or skill of adults. Their goals may not be the same as yours. Pushing a cloth or sponge in circles may be fun in itself. But with patient guidance and careful planning, these young children can have fun and learn by sharing some of the everyday routines in your room.

Make a habit of finding little ways to involve the pretoddlers in daily routines:

Snacks and mealtimes Some of the older pretoddlers can dispose of their trash after eating. They can clear their dishes and put them in a dishpan on the floor or a low table. They can use a sponge to help wipe tables and seats. These are chores to share and things to talk about. When food is being prepared, a child or two may help add ingredients or stir liquids.

Cleaning With close supervision, pretoddlers can help arrange shelves and pick up toys. If your center closes in the late afternoon, you can start these chores after parents have called for a majority of the children. With a small number of children, you can relax and enjoy the pace of their help and still complete your daily tasks.

Caring for the environment Pretoddlers can share or copy the ways you care for the environment. They can help feel the soil to see if the plants need water. They can help you change the pictures and bulletin boards. They can help you change toys. As you take toys from the storage closet, they can put new toys on a shelf.

PLAN A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The safety of the pretoddlers in your care is one of your major concerns. For safe supervision, arrange the play space so you can see into all corners. The same precautions are needed in the play yard. Indoors, check the thermostat and open windows as needed. Make sure you offer pretoddlers fresh water for drinking. Any faucet a pretoddler can reach should not have scalding hot water. All outside doors and gates should be secure. Check daily for hazards. These might include play equipment with loose bolts or frayed ropes. Always remove broken toys. With careful planning and supervision, you can protect the health and safety of your pretoddlers. Since the child care center is planned especially for children, it should be safer than any home which is planned more for adults. All caregivers should have first-aid training. Keep a safety manual close at hand. *Basic First Aid* by the American Red Cross is good. *A Sigh Of Relief* by M. I. Green has pictures and simple steps to follow for emergencies.

Here are some more health and safety tips:

Know what to do in an emergency. Study and post emergency procedures in plain sight. In the event of a storm warning or fire drill, you will know exactly what to do. Post "communicable disease" charts in clear view of both parents and caregivers.

Keep some things in locked places. Pretoddlers can move faster and climb higher than you might expect. Cleaning products, medicines and employees' belongings (which might contain aspirin or vitamins) should be stored in locked cabinets or in the staff room.

Guard against electrical shock. Any electrical outlets should have protective coverings. Make sure the pretoddlers cannot reach or pull on electrical cords.

Keep things clean. The floor is where pretoddlers spend a lot of their time playing. It should be clean and free of spills. Follow your center's regulations for washing and disinfecting toys.

CHECK OUT YOUR PRETODDLER AREA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Use the checklist below to help you look at and think about how your pretoddler environment is managed. Think about ways to improve the management system for any items not checked.

____ each caregiver knows specific duties and routine tasks

____ written ____ posted in clear view

____ regular schedule for routines and activities

____ written ____ posted in clear view

____ caregivers regularly make plans to lead individual and small-group activities

____ written ____ posted in clear view

____ a caregiver greets every parent and pretoddler

____ whoever is free ____ a specific caregiver

____ daily communication with parents is planned for

____ records/charts ____ report forms ____ bulletin board

____ routines for drop-in care are clear

____ attendance charts ____ name tags ____ supervising plans

____ regular time for snacks and meals

____ procedures written ____ each caregiver has specific duties

____ regular routines for diapering posted in diaper-changing area

____ plans written ____ daily diapering records kept

____ plans to include pretoddlers in caring for the environment

____ plans written ____ note made of which children help and what they do

____ caregivers regularly conduct safety checks

____ emergency procedures posted
____ only safe toys selected for use in the environment
____ evacuation drills conducted
____ cleaning supplies in locked cabinets
____ hazards and broken toys removed
____ floors and room clean
____ toys disinfected regularly
____ handwashing regulations strictly enforced in eating and diapering areas

SUPPORTING AND RESPECTING DIFFERENCES

HELP PRETODDLERS LIKE THEMSELVES

When you plan and arrange the center environment especially for pretoddlers, you are making it possible for these children to like themselves. People, pretoddlers to adults, feel good about themselves when they feel successful. For a pretoddler a feeling of success may follow jumping from a step, removing a sock or eating with a spoon. Your main job is to plan an environment that says "yes" to these young children. The surroundings permit the children to touch, taste and explore everything in sight. The toys and play units encourage practicing old skills and trying new ones. The caregivers have warm praise. They share the joy of new accomplishments with each child. Pretoddlers have begun to walk and talk. These are the two keys to the independence each child wants to achieve. The more pretoddlers can find to do on their own, the more successful they will feel. In turn, the more successful you should feel as a caregiver.

The environment can help pretoddlers get to know and like themselves:

Mirrors Shatter-proof mirrors belong in the pretoddler environment. It is good to have both full-length and hand mirrors. Full-length mirrors for pretoddlers are best mounted as near the floor as possible. The children can use these mirrors independently. Sometimes, you may choose to play games with a pretoddler in front of a mirror. This helps the child understand that what she sees is her image. Touch her while saying, "I am touching your tummy." Have the pretoddler look in the mirror at something new or unusual and say, "See your new shoes in the mirror."

Photos Take photographs of the children in your care. Put these on the wall at child's eye level. A pretoddler can find and look at a picture of himself. Or you can use these photographs along with pictures of other familiar objects to make books for the children.

Opportunities for success Get to know the pretoddlers in your group and what they can and like to do. Then arrange toys and play opportunities that will help each child find a series of successful experiences each day. This way you help the pretoddlers learn, grow and feel good about themselves.

SUPPORT DIFFERENCES IN SIMPLE, NATURAL WAYS

Pretoddlers are busy learning to walk and talk. They also are learning about their culture. They are beginning to form their views of life as well. For this reason, give some thought to the toys, books, finger plays, songs and behavior you use. What surrounds pretoddlers affects their developing thoughts and way of looking at life. This includes what they see and hear, what they play, who they play with and the toys they use. These things blend together and become a part of each child growing through childhood and into adulthood. The easiest way for pretoddlers to learn about different cultures, life-styles and views is to play with children and caregivers with different family backgrounds. Pretoddlers should see, hear and experience familiar things so they feel comfortable, as well as have opportunities to learn from new and different experiences.

Plan ways to share different life-styles:

Reflect the community. The best child care supports each child's customs, family background and language. As much as possible, adult caregivers should reflect the family backgrounds of the children in the center. These caregivers can help a child maintain a specific life-style or language.

Share your differences. Daily contact with adults from different family backgrounds is the most natural way to teach about differences. If your culture is different from that of any of your pretoddlers, you can share songs and rhymes from your childhood with them.

Keep opportunities open for all. A male caregiver adds variety to the pretoddler environment. The greatest value comes when male and female caregivers equally share all duties, activities and play. *All* pretoddlers should be encouraged to play with *all* the toys in the room.

Provide materials reflecting many life-styles. Choose dolls, puppets, books and toys to reflect different ethnic groups and life-styles. For accurate information about children around the world write for a catalog from the U.S. Committee for Unicef, 331 E. 38th Street, New York, New York 10016.

INVITE OTHERS TO SHARE YOUR PRETODDLER ENVIRONMENT

You can add variety to your pretoddler environment by inviting other people to visit your group. Just do not overwhelm your little ones with too many strangers or too many changes. Be sure your visitor knows the habits and interests of pretoddlers. It may be best if your visitor just sits in one spot while the pretoddlers are free to come and go. If you put your pretoddlers in a group of four or five, warn your visitor that it is likely that a child or two may wander away after a short while. The best visitors will have something to show, an instrument to play or simply enjoy talking to these young children. Exposing pretoddlers to a variety of adults and ideas makes the *new* and *different* seem interesting instead of strange.

Some interesting people you may want to have visit your pretoddlers:

Infants Pretoddlers have a keen interest in examining babies closely. You might find a parent with a great deal of patience who will hold an infant and talk to the curious pretoddlers for a few minutes.

Older children Often school-age children are kind and helpful to pretoddlers. They can visit on a regular or occasional basis. They can dance with the young ones or share the fun of peek-a-boo or toys.

Elderly men and women A calm, patient adult makes an ideal visitor. Elderly people can provide an extra lap. They can give their attention to a single child, pointing out pictures, talking and touching.

Special visitors Your pretoddlers may enjoy the variety provided by people who wear a special uniform or play a musical instrument. Always keep in mind that the best visitors are low-key. They talk quietly and move carefully to avoid frightening the children.

LOOK FOR THE ADVANTAGES OF MIXED-AGE GROUPS

This book describes environments, toys and routines to use with pretoddlers. But we do not want you to overlook considering the advantages of caring for children of different ages in the same group. What is called mixed-age or cross-age care may occur already at some times each day in your center. First thing in the morning and late in the day attendance may be low. At these times many centers mix the ages of children in one group. In some centers the drop-in care program will include children of different ages. There are a few model child care centers which care for children from infancy to school age in one small group. At present, most centers group children by age or skill level for practical reasons. More thought and study are needed to design equipment, room arrangements, routines and schedules for child care programs for children of different ages in the same group. There are some real benefits in mixed-age group care for children.

Below are some reasons for caring for children of different ages in the same group:

The younger children learn from the older. The younger children will watch older children and, as a result, try new things. This helps them learn new ways to play, new words and ways to think, as well as new behaviors and how to get along with people.

The older children learn from the younger. It helps older children to learn patience if they are around younger children. They can take pride in and feel good about teaching younger children. They also can learn and practice some important caring skills.

Mixed-age groups help children from small families. A single child or a child with just one brother or sister nearly the same age can learn a lot by being in a group of children of different ages. With the trend toward smaller families, a child in a group with a mixture of ages can have experiences with older or younger children not otherwise possible.

EXPECT SOME BEHAVIORS THAT ARE LESS APPEALING THAN OTHERS

While caring for any group of pretoddlers, don't be surprised if you see some behaviors that annoy you. Learn to be calm and patient. Of course, limits must be set for the sake of both the individual child and the group of children. The trick is to understand pretoddlers. They don't set out or plan to annoy you. They are simply busy exploring their world and enjoying themselves. On the list below, check how you feel about behaviors that are common to pretoddlers but may not appeal to an adult. Rate the item from one to four:

1 - doesn't annoy me
2 - bothers me a little
3 - annoys me some
4 - cannot stand

____ squeals loudly

____ messes in food

____ plays with diapers

____ dumps toys everywhere

____ throws toys

____ wiggles while being dressed

____ sucks thumb

____ cries for parent without let-up

____ doesn't want to stop anything while having fun

____ refuses to eat certain foods

____ says "No!" to everything

____ insists on helping you do things

____ wants to do things own way, at own speed

Think about any items you rated with a three or a four. As a result of your reactions to annoying behaviors, have you been involved in any needless arguments with a pretoddler? Or did you handle the situation gracefully, without anger or a loud voice?

THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN BEHAVIOR

What does an adult do in a room of pretoddlers in a child care center all day? That varies according to the center and the adult. The point is that whatever a caregiver does in a child care center, young children need adults for direction, attention and approval. Pretoddlers learn how to behave by watching the people, especially adults, around them. If they are treated with kindness, their behavior usually will reflect that. If they hear harsh words or manners, pretoddlers are likely to copy them as well. Studies of child care centers have found that caregivers behave in different ways with young children. Some behaviors help pretoddlers towards healthy development more than others.

Most caregiver behavior includes some of the following qualities:

Encouraging The caregiver encourages pretoddlers in their selection of toys and play. The caregiver uses words and short sentences to name things. This helps children understand more about the things and people in their world.

Guiding This involves helping the children through a period of play, diaper changes, meals or naps. Some caregivers may guide more directly and firmly than others. In either case this means getting through the routines in a positive way without much conflict.

Restricting The caregiver makes it clear to the children that there are definite rules. For example, biting is not allowed.

Neutral The caregiver neither encourages, manages or restricts. The caregiver may or may not talk to the children. There is no attempt to encourage, guide or restrict while getting the children through the daily schedule.

What kinds of behavior do you find yourself using most? If you find that you spend most of your time CORRECTING or RESTRICTING children, you may want to find some new ways to use the environment so that you can ENCOURAGE and GUIDE more often.

CHECK THE WAYS YOU SUPPORT DIFFERENCES

Use the checklist below to help you look at how you plan and arrange the environment to support and encourage differences.

You can tell if you are supporting and encouraging differences if you can think of a child for whom you've planned:

____ experiences to fit a special interest in dancing, blowing bubbles or the like.

____ a new activity or way to help a child who has a particular need to learn a new skill or develop muscles through play.

____ adjustments in routines to allow for a child's low-energy day.

You can tell if you respect each child if you:

____ like each child for what he or she is instead of what he or she can do.

____ expect each child to progress from one stage to the next instead of comparing one child to another.

____ overlook those things which you may not like, such as children who whine or who have dirty hands and faces.

____ accept a child's need to show anger.

____ plan the center environment to include things like mirrors.

You can tell if you encourage differences if you:

____ know about each child's family - brothers and sisters, single parent, grandparents.

____ know which children have another culture and language or have lived in other countries.

____ include books and pictures and plan experiences to reflect a variety of cultures and life-styles.

____ know which holidays are important in each child's home and how they are celebrated.

ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PLAY

UNDERSTAND YOUR PRETODDLERS

The key to planning a sound program for pretoddlers is to have a clear idea of some of the things they can or cannot do. Pretoddlers play in ways that are different from both older and younger children. The plans for an infant area are not suited to pretoddlers. Pretoddlers are not ready for the organization and small group structure that older children enjoy. Combine the advice of child care experts and experienced caregivers with your own observations to build your understanding of pretoddlers. The more you know about what pretoddlers are like and what they like to do, the easier it is for you to plan a safe environment which encourages and supports their daily growth and learning through play.

The general statements below may help you understand pretoddlers:

Pretoddlers like to be on the move. The freedom to walk about and practice all kinds of movements helps pretoddlers' minds, as well as their bodies.

Language is in the making. The jibber-jabber of these pretoddlers soon will grow into real speech. New experiences and a trusting adult to provide needed words and phrases help unlock the secret of language.

Playing with others comes later. Even in a group, pretoddlers more often play side by side than with each other. Do not expect these children to share or take turns. These are social skills to be learned slowly over the next few years.

Once is not enough. These young children like the same routine, the same caregivers and the same simple activities and songs repeated over and over. They find it hard to bring a fun time to an end.

Strong feelings are not unusual at this age. Imagine knowing that words have a magic power to get things done, but not being able to find or use the right words. Combine this frustration with a need to be more independent. No wonder some pretoddlers are overwhelmed with feelings of anger.

KNOW WHAT A PRETODDLER CAN DO

Below are some of the different skills you can expect to see in pretoddlers. Remember: EACH CHILD GROWS AT HIS OR HER OWN RATE. The items listed are averages or norms, not rules for each stage of development. We list the skills you may expect to see in your youngest and oldest children. This will give you some idea of the wide range of skills to expect in any group of 13 to 24 month olds.

At 13 months the pretoddler — *At 24 months the pretoddler*

ACTIVE PLAY

____ crawls and creeps rapidly, pulls to standing position
____ is walking or beginning to walk with arms held out
____ walks up stairs with help; backs down stairs on own
____ can play a simple game of ball
____ likes push-pull toys

____ walks to get to places, can avoid obstacles in paths
____ walks with even rhythm; can run, has difficulty stopping
____ walks up and down stairs, leading with one foot
____ can walk up to and kick a ball
____ will push anything that is not too heavy - trucks, chairs, boxes, blocks and crates

FINGER AND HAND SKILLS

____ scribbles, but may not look at paper
____ has difficulty turning pages of book one at a time
____ unable to turn door handles
____ uses either hand
____ likes to knock down stacked blocks
____ likes to play with snap beads

____ scribbles while looking at paper
____ is learning to turn pages of book one at a time
____ can turn door handles
____ may show preference for right or left hand
____ builds a tower of several cubes
____ may be able to string large beads on a string

SELF-HELP SKILLS

____ eats mostly with fingers, tries to use a spoon
____ holds spoon in fist, lots of spilling

____ eats independently with both fingers and spoon
____ holds spoon with palm up, not too much spilling

At 13 months the pretoddler

___ holds cup with two hands
___ cooperates in dressing, might pull shoes, sock, or hat off
___ is still in diapers
___ needs help washing and drying hands

At 24 months the pretoddler

___ holds cup with one hand
___ helps dress and undress, can find armholes, takes off shoes, socks and pants
___ may tell you when diaper needs changing and why; may be ready to toilet independently
___ likes to help with washing and drying own hands

SOCIAL AND PLAY SKILLS

___ plays by self
___ watches others
___ beginning to claim and defend toys
___ may squeal, laugh or make funny sounds to get attention
___ moves around a lot, exploring everything in sight
___ likes an adult in sight while playing
___ plays near others, not necessarily with them
___ may try hugging, patting and kissing others
___ spends a lot of time getting toys from others; learns "It's mine!"
___ likes to control others and order them around
___ has need to explore and be independent, which may lead to accidents
___ is able to play without adult constantly in view

LANGUAGE AND THINKING SKILLS

___ uses jibber-jabber; very little is understandable by adults
___ may use a few words; understands more than can use
___ may point, pull on caregiver's arm or say, "eh" when help is needed
___ may call self "Baby"
___ cannot often imagine objects which are out of sight
___ listens to, looks at others a great deal
___ at least a fourth of what child says is understandable by adults
___ understands over 250 words; uses many of these words when speaking
___ seeks caregiver's attention or help by saying, "Want ball."
___ may be able to give first name
___ may think about and remember objects out of sight
___ repeats words, copies actions of others

BE ALERT TO DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS

It is important to observe and keep track of each pretoddler's development. If a child is in your center full time, she may spend more of her waking hours with you than with her parents. You may have a more accurate view of how pretoddlers behave and develop than some parents. As a result, you will want a method for observing and keeping track of each pretoddler's development. Some difficulties, if detected early, can be remedied more easily. If you see a pretoddler only now and then, you won't have records to check. In any case, if you observe a pretoddler who has unusual behaviors or cannot perform a number of the usual skills, discuss that child with your director.

One of the items below by itself may not indicate a problem. Two or more of these occurring often may indicate a pretoddler is in need of special help. Watch to see if a child:

Has difficulty hearing does not turn head or move towards loud or unusual sounds; does not come when called by name to snack or favorite activity; pulls on ear.

Has repetitive movements rocks body, claps hands or taps toys or own body for a long period of time.

Is physically inactive does not actively walk, run, jump, crawl and explore.

Seems uncomfortable or unhappy often cries often or seems uncomfortable or unhappy most of the time.

Has trouble seeing tilts head or holds head forward, holds toys close to eyes, squints or rubs eyes often.

Has unusual skin unusual skin color, sores or skin irritations, puffy or red-rimmed eyes.

Seldom tries to talk is nearing two years of age and makes little or no effort to say a few words.

LEARN HOW TO CHOOSE TOYS WISELY

Toys are for fun and learning. Unfortunately toys which have not been chosen wisely can be very dangerous, even deadly. The selection of toys is very important to help protect the safety of the children in your center. For pretoddlers the best toys are free of sharp edges or points. They have no outer moving parts which can pinch fingers. Wooden toys should be smooth and free of splinters. Light-weight blocks and toys are suggested. Pretoddlers learn about their world by throwing toys. Heavy toys make dangerous weapons.

Below are some more guidelines for selecting toys for pretoddlers:

Choose washable toys that are safe for chewing. Some pretoddlers still use their mouths for exploring. Avoid painted toys unless they are labeled *non-toxic*. Any toys with batteries are not appropriate. All toys should be washable and easily disinfected.

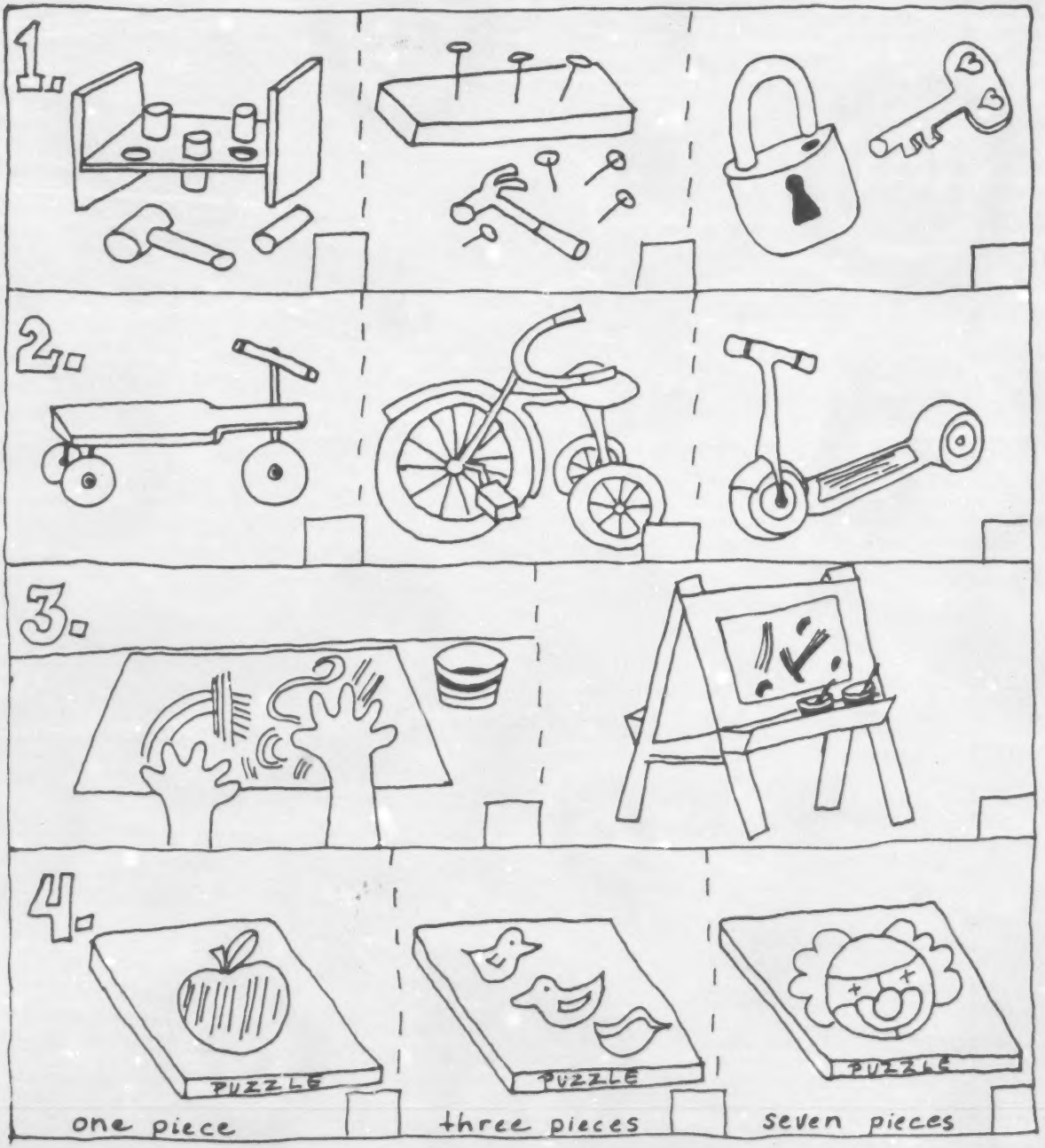
Avoid toys with parts that can be swallowed. Avoid any toys like cars and trucks with loose wheels or stuffed animals with button eyes or small parts that can break off and be swallowed. Any toys with pieces less than one-and-one-half inches across are not recommended for pretoddlers. Balloons, which can quickly become uninflated, are easily swallowed and can cause suffocation.

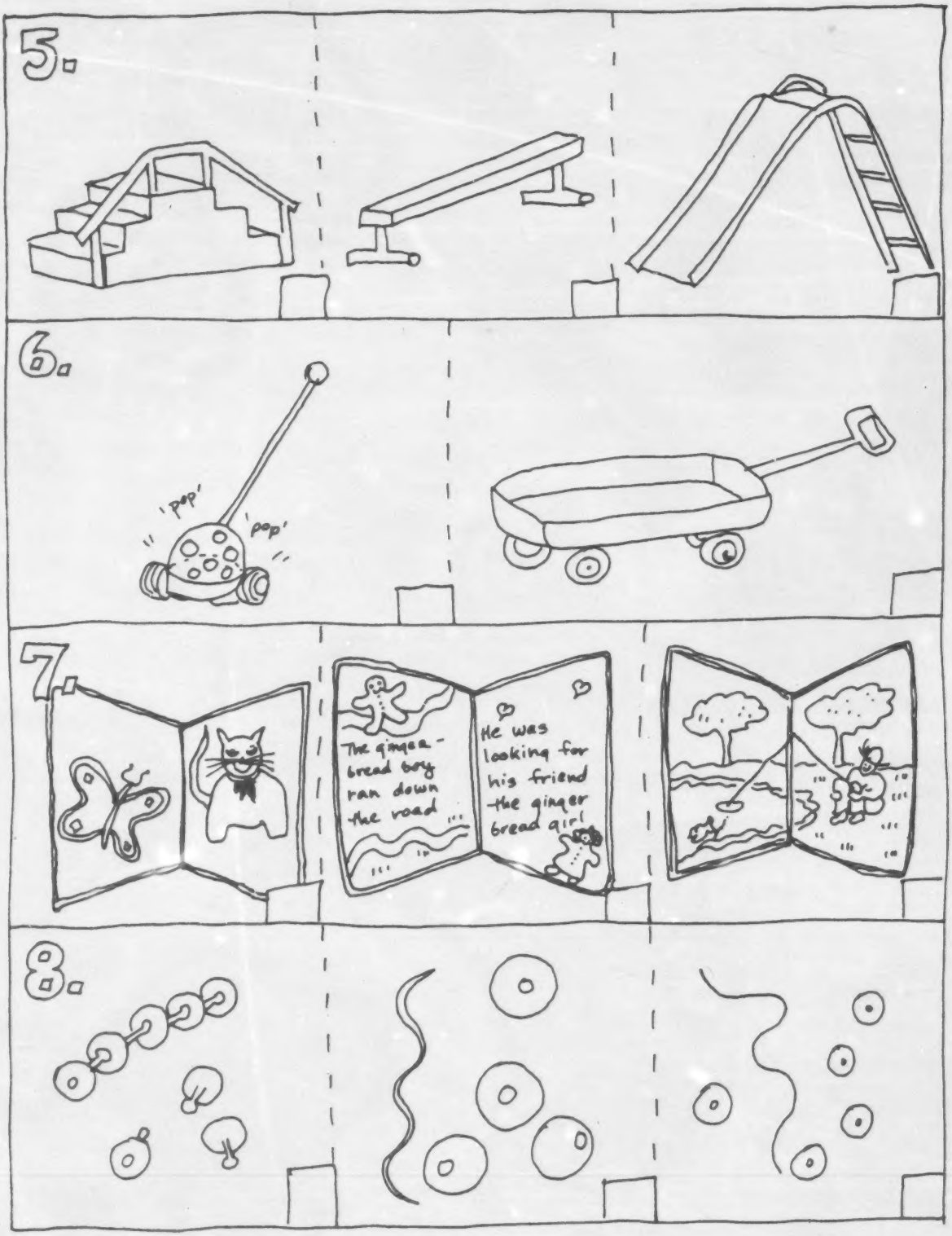
Pick unbreakable toys. Avoid brittle plastic which produces sharp edges when broken. Glass objects including glass mirrors do not belong in the pretoddler environment.

Watch for toys or equipment with sharp edges. Some pretoddlers are unsteady on their feet. Any toys, blocks or furniture with sharp edges are dangerous. Save the ride-on toys and kiddie cars until the child is walking securely.

MATCH PRETODDLERS' SKILLS WITH THE TOYS YOU CHOOSE

Here are some toys and activities you might choose to use with pretoddlers. In each row, put an X in the box below the one you feel would be most appropriate to use with a group of pretoddlers. Of course, you will find a wide range of abilities in every group, but select the one thing which is generally the best for pretoddlers. Compare your choices with ours on page 76.




5.
6.
'pop'
'pop'
7.
The gingerbread boy ran down the road
He was looking for his friend the gingerbread girl
8.

Compare your thoughts with ours. We based our choices on the experiences of caregivers who have worked with groups of pretoddlers. Remember, the skills and interests of pretoddlers differ. Our choices may not be the best for *every* pretoddler you know.

1. *A pegboard* is safe fun for even the youngest pretoddlers. Learning to put a key into a lock and turning it will come later. A hammer and nails are definitely not suited for a group of pretoddlers.

2. *A kiddie car* or sit-on riding toy is fun for a pretoddler who is walking securely. Older children have the skills necessary for riding trikes and scooters.

3. *Finger painting* is more appropriate for pretoddlers than using a brush at an easel.

4. *A one-piece puzzle* of a single object is best for pretoddlers. The more complicated puzzles are for older children. Of course, young children's skills with puzzles vary *widely*.

5. Pretoddlers like to practice *climbing* up and down low stairs and low slides with only three steps. The balance beam and high slide are better for older children.

6. Pretoddlers in the beginning stages of walking are better suited to a *push-toy* like a corn popper than a wagon. The older pretoddlers will enjoy filling the wagon with toys and pulling it around the room.

7. A book with *one simple picture* on each page is the best selection for pretoddlers. Don't be surprised, however, to find an occasional pretoddler who likes to search through the details of more complicated illustrations looking for something familiar.

8. *Snap beads* belong in the pretoddler environment. An older pretoddler with help from an adult can string beads. But for free-play pretoddlers are able to have more fun on their own with large snap or pop beads.

BE AWARE OF HOW PRETODDLERS LEARN TO NAME THINGS

You can help pretoddlers learn to name things. Understand and follow the different stages through which each child will most likely go. At first, a child needs an adult to supply the names of things. As time passes, a child will be able to recognize and point to things while an adult names them. With time and practice, the pretoddler may say the names of things. Of course, exactly when a child will be able to do this varies. When talking with a pretoddler, try to keep it simple. Talk about just one new thing at a time. Touching or pointing at whatever you are talking about helps the child know exactly what you are naming. Expect to repeat the names of most things more than once before a child can know and come to use the word. Remember that a child may recognize or remember the sight, sound, touch, taste or feel of something before being able to name an object like a *truck* or describe a quality like *soft*.

Here are some ways to help pretoddlers name things:

Use large pictures. Large, clear pictures of familiar things like cats and dogs are good for helping pretoddlers learn to name things. You might direct a child's attention to a picture hanging on the wall. Or a child might point and say, "Wa-dat?" In either case, point to the picture and say, "That is a dog." Later if the child finds and points to the picture, say, "Yes, that's a dog." The next stage is to make a game of having the child point to or touch a picture that you name.

Name things in books. The first step in looking at a book with a young child is to point at a familiar object like a house and name it. Repeat this stage until the child seems familiar with the pictures. Then have fun with the pretoddler, asking, "Where's the house?" Some time after this, the child will be able to say the word when you point to a picture of a house and ask, "What is this?"

Help pretoddlers name everything. You can help pretoddlers learn the name of anything in and around the center in the same way. Make naming things a natural, fun part of each day. Always match what you do with the abilities of the child. Then the child can always succeed.

MAKE TIME TO PRACTICE SELF-HELP SKILLS

It makes good sense to use every opportunity to help pretoddlers learn and practice self-help skills. You can take advantage of the pretoddlers' love of imitating adults and find ways to let them actively participate in a variety of helpful activities. It helps to show a child just one new step at a time. Always build on what a child can already do. Talk about what the child is to do and praise success. If a child is having a bad day or is not feeling well, do not insist that the child perform a task. These young children benefit from the feelings of independence that arise out of developing new movements and skills. Always look for playful ways to encourage pretoddlers to learn and practice self-help skills.

Self-feeding Encourage each child to self-feed no matter how messy. Self-feeding is a big step on the long road to independence. Soft, mushy foods make using a spoon easier. A cup with two handles and a weighted bottom helps beginners. Next use a cup with one handle. Fill cups just one-fourth full.

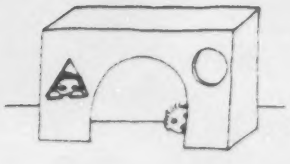
Undressing Pretoddlers can learn to untie shoes, take off socks, hats and pants. Plan ways to involve pretoddlers whenever undressing is necessary. Show how to remove socks. Pull a sock over a child's heel and then pull on the toe a little. The child can easily finish the job of pulling off the sock.

Dressing A pretoddler can learn to put his own arm into the first sleeve of a shirt. You can help with the second. A child can learn to step into her trousers. Bunch each leg into a little circle. Have the child put one foot in each circle. Next help her find the top of her trousers and show her how to "pull."

Blowing a nose As a pretoddler approaches two years of age, he may learn to blow into a tissue which an adult holds to his nose. Using straws to make bubbles may help pretoddlers learn what "blow" means.

PLAY GAMES TO SHOW THAT OUT-OF-SIGHT IS NOT ALWAYS OUT OF MIND

Since infancy pretoddlers have been slowly developing the ability to think about or remember things which are out of sight. During the second half of the first year, an infant uses this power to recall a mother or main caregiver who is out of sight. At nine to ten months, a baby can find objects which you hide under a cover. Infants and pretoddlers like the game of peek-a-boo because it tests the child's memory in a very short and fun way. Between 13 and 15 months, a pretoddler's memory of a parent or main caregiver develops even more. When a child feels secure, hiding games are fun. A pretoddler will like and want to play games that include short separations from an adult. Toys with objects that disappear also test the ability to remember and think about what is out of sight. You will notice that as a child learns more words, this thinking skill also develops.



Here are some simple hiding games you can play with pretoddlers:

Try peek-a-boo. Children love to play this simple hide-and-seek game, peeking around the side of doorways, furniture or hands. Peek holes in playhouses or play units add opportunities in the center environment for playing this fun game.

Play hide-and-seek. Indoors or outdoors, a pretoddler may delight in finding a place to hide and calling out "Find." The adult follows the voice and quickly discovers the child.

Hide objects. Make up your own simple hiding games to play with pretoddlers. For example, take a small toy and show it to a child. Wrap the toy in several layers of tissue paper. Let the child unwrap and find the toy.

Use toys with objects that disappear. Pretoddlers like toys with objects that disappear and reappear. A postal box toy with shape blocks provides fun play. The child puts the shapes through the holes and the blocks reappear in the shelf below. With pounding boards, the pegs reappear on the other side.

PROVIDE FOR PLAYING AND REPEATING FAVORITE PRETODDLER ACTIVITIES

Pretoddlers need lots of room and different ways to practice their movement skills. These include walking, maybe some running, climbing up and climbing in, as well as some crawling. The pretoddler environment should support other kinds of play. Of course, the wide range of differences that naturally occur requires that different levels of difficulty be available. For example, a 23 month old may enjoy matching small animal toys to picture cards. A slightly younger child may enjoy matching similar animals by pairs. The 13 month old may just want to hold the toy while walking around the room.

Here are some things that pretoddlers like to do:

Gathering Have toys and small objects that pretoddlers can pick up and carry around. Have places they can drop or leave small collections.

Filling and dumping Containers of all sizes provide countless ways for pretoddlers to experiment with putting various objects into containers. Then the natural thing is to empty or dump full containers.

Stacking and knocking down Blocks are for stacking. Empty boxes or small food containers are for stacking. Stacked blocks, boxes or food containers are for knocking down.

Fingering small toys Pretoddlers like small toys - *not too small for safety's sake.* They like things that they can fit together and take apart like inset puzzles and snap beads.

Gooey materials Pretoddlers like the opportunity for playing with sand, water, mud, finger paint and play dough.

Imitative play Older pretoddlers may put a doll to sleep, feed a puppet or let a toy animal talk on a toy telephone. This play imitates adult behavior. More imaginative, pretend play will begin some time later in childhood.

Word play Looking at a book or picture or hearing a record may lead a child to start using or playing with words.

ENCOURAGE PRETODDLERS TO TALK

Caregivers must be aware of the important role they have in helping young children learn language. Adults can't force a child to talk, but they can do a lot to encourage speech. Children who are free to move and explore in an interesting, well-planned environment have experiences that lead to learning and speaking. Pretoddlers need someone who listens and asks and answers questions. They need to hear clear speech. Baby talk may make it harder to learn words. Remember, children usually understand more words than they use. They may also stop using a word for a while. When a child knows many words, two or three words may be put together to make sentences. Each child learns language in a personal way. With pretoddlers, think of every activity as being an opportunity for teaching language. So talk and listen while you change diapers, serve snacks or play outdoors. Use short, simple sentences with these young children. They benefit most when you talk to them slightly above their level of understanding.

You can help pretoddlers learn language:

Add a few words. Often a child will say just one or possibly two words. Say that word in a simple, short sentence to help the child learn common phrases. When a child says, "Dog," you might say, "The dog barks."

Give more information. Besides adding words, you can help pretoddlers learn language by giving more information. When a child says, "Drink wa," you can add, "Here's a drink of water. You must be thirsty. Water is good for you."

Encourage questions. Sometimes being helpful is not always the best thing. You may want to assist a child who needs help with a coat or toy. Wait. Give the child time. A child who doesn't have to ask for things doesn't get to practice language.

TALK ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON

How much and how well a child can talk will change a great deal between the ages of 13 and 24 months. Later success in school is linked strongly to how much language a young child has heard. How do adults who spend a lot of time with young children talk to them? What can you talk about? Just talk about what you are doing or seeing. "I am changing your diaper because it is wet. Now you will be dry." "See the leaf on the ground. It is red and orange. It fell from that tree." Or you can talk about cause and effect. "The floor is dirty. I will sweep it. Then it will be clean again." Talk about anything and everything. But don't talk all the time. Watch each child. Children need time to be on their own to sort out their thoughts, to give total attention to their play or to learn a new skill.

You can make a point of including a few basic bits and pieces of information in any and all conversations with pretoddlers:

Numbers Make a game of counting fingers and toes, toys and crackers. Begin with *one* each time. Sing simple number songs or chant simple number rhymes.

Size and shape Talk about the size and shape of everything. The ball is *round*. Get the *big* scoop.

Color Remember that children can match colors before they can name them. Say things like, "Find a blue ball like this one." Compare colors like, "You have brown shoes. I have brown pants."

Qualities Talk about *rough* and *smooth*, *hard* and *soft*, *big* and *little*. Children need lots of experiences to learn qualities. As you describe experiences for the child, learning may take place even if the child just listens and doesn't choose to repeat your words.

Direction Help children learn words like *up* and *down*, *in* and *out*, *under* and *over*. Play simple hiding games. Ask, "Are you *under* there?" Children learn words like *up* best through the actual experience of being *up* - either on the top of a step or low ladder.

LEARN TO BREAK SKILLS INTO SIMPLE PARTS

Adults do many things without having to think about the movements they use to perform the activity. As pretoddlers learn new skills, they must think about each movement and practice it until it becomes automatic. Children's muscles and nerves must be ready to learn new movements. Then they need time to practice a movement until it can be done without thought. A pretoddler learning the difficult task of combining two movements doesn't have time to listen or talk. A friendly adult who wants to talk may even prevent the pretoddler from completing this task. As a caregiver, your understanding of this process can be very useful. You can study tasks and break them into simple movements. Then you can show a child just one simple step at a time. With practice, pretoddlers are able to learn new skills smoothly.

The simple task of using a spoon is made up of several movements. The first step in helping a child learn spoon-feeding is holding a spoon. Success is not immediately expected in the other steps that follow:

Holding spoon

Getting food on spoon

Moving spoon to mouth

Opening mouth

Putting spoon into mouth

Closing mouth

Removing spoon from mouth

Returning spoon to dish or table

CHECK ON THE OPPORTUNITIES YOU PROVIDE PRETODDLERS

Use the checklist below to help you look at and think about what you know about pretoddler development and how best to plan the pretoddler environment. Look for ways to improve opportunities in your center for meaningful play.

In the blank space write the number of times each activity is included in your program. Use 0 - never; 1 - once a week; 2 - two or three times a week; and 3 - daily. Add a plus sign if the activity occurs both indoors and out.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTIVE PLAY

____ crawling and creeping
____ walking on both hard and soft surfaces
____ climbing up and down stairs
____ playing with balls
____ dancing
____ sliding
____ pushing and pulling toys
____ lifting and carrying

OPPORTUNITIES FOR USING FINGERS/HANDS

____ painting
____ coloring/scribbling
____ molding clay
____ putting together and taking apart snap beads
____ using large pegboards
____ stacking rings and nesting toys
____ playing with small blocks
____ playing with clothespins
____ hitting pounding boards

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-HELP SKILLS

____ snack and mealtime used to practice skills

____ eating with spoon
____ drinking from cup
____ clearing table
____ wiping spills

___ helping with dressing and undressing
___ talking about *wet* and *dry* diapers
___ helping with handwashing

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN SOCIAL AND PLAY SKILLS

___ enough favorite toys so that several children can play at once

___ acts of gentleness shown over and over

___ silly, fun games with an adult

___ room to move around a lot while playing

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN LANGUAGE AND THINKING SKILLS

___ caregivers sit or squat to listen to and answer questions

___ caregivers provide simple speech patterns

___ caregivers plan new activities and experiences and play simple games using:

___ numbers ___ parts of the body

___ colors ___ size and shape

___ caregivers encourage pretoddlers to help sort and put away toys and materials

___ caregivers include stacking rings and nesting blocks in play materials

___ caregivers show how beads, blocks and toys can be sorted by color, size or shape

___ caregivers allow time and flexibility for children to finish games and activities

Review your answers. Which things happen the most? The least? Are these planned or do they just happen by accident? Remember, writing daily and weekly plans assures that you really do provide a wide variety of experiences for the pretoddlers in your care.

USING MATERIALS IN CREATIVE WAYS

LET PRETODDLERS EXPLORE WITH THEIR SENSES

Young children use all of their senses to learn about the world. They see, hear, feel, smell and taste to discover the qualities of things around them. They learn about the shape, size, color, softness and hardness of things. Children learn much about their world through play. Caregivers can be of great help by using words to describe different sensations. To be effective, any experiences you plan with young children must be fun for both you and the children. If you need any materials have them ready before you begin. Keep things short - a few minutes at one time will do. If a child doesn't understand or can't do an activity, save it for another day.

Encourage listening Make a game of listening to a clock or bell. Show a child how to listen by holding a clock to an ear. Supply the words, "Tick, tock." Music boxes and wind chimes make nice sounds. Call attention to the variety of sounds in the center environment.

Exploring smells Help children in fun ways learn to recognize the different aromas around them. Smells from the kitchen include: onions, garlic celery, bread baking, soup cooking, ginger, allspice, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, lemon, lime, orange, thyme, basil, sage and mint. Outdoors you might find new cut grass, pine or fir trees, and flowers like rose, lily of the valley, jasmine and sweet alyssum.

Feeling objects Children touch everything they can without being told. With barefeet and bare skin, pretoddlers can use more than their hands to feel things. At 15 months a child might enjoy reaching into a bag and feeling objects. Make a game of matching two squares of sandpaper, macaroni, pieces of corduroy and other textures. Older pretoddlers might be able to name what they touch.

Talking about taste You can play simple tasting games, beginning with *sweet*. Have the children show you their tongues. Talk about how tongues are used for tasting. Let the children sample honey, ripe berries and other naturally sweet things. Then use a lemon to introduce the word *sour*.

INCLUDE ART EXPERIENCES

You can begin art experiences with pretoddlers who are past the stage of putting everything in their mouths. Success with these experiences requires careful planning. While leading an activity, the adult in charge must be free to give complete attention to just that one thing. Very small groups of two or three, maybe four, children work best. At first, expect the children to spend time just experimenting with the materials you give them. Pretoddlers enjoy the process. They give little or no thought to the object or outcome of their painting or scribbling. They will want to pinch and poke before they are ready to shape or roll play dough. Show how to hold a crayon or brush, but allow for other ways of doing things. Allow a child to hold a crayon in a fist instead of with the fingers.

Here are some beginning art experiences:

Scribbling Pretoddlers like to use both pencils and crayons. Use small non-toxic crayons for pretoddlers' small hands. You might break and peel the paper off the crayons so the children can use them freely. Cover a low table completely with paper and tape the edges to make a good surface for scribbling.

Finger painting Caregivers have been very inventive coming up with satisfactory "paints" for pretoddlers' fingers. These might include such things as syrup or pudding. You will have to decide what works best for you, how you feel about using foodstuffs for something besides eating, or how you feel about providing a sugar-based food which the children will undoubtedly eat.

Sponge painting Some young children don't like to touch gooey things and won't want to finger paint. These children may enjoy sponge painting. Use sponges about two inches square and an inch thick and tempera or finger paint. The child dips the sponge into a small tray of paint. At first use just one of the primary colors - red, blue or yellow.

Brush painting with warm water Begin with a small bucket of water and a paint brush. Your pretoddlers can "paint" anything you can allow like kiddie cars and sidewalks.

GIVE PRETODDLERS A CHANCE TO BE MESSY

Pretoddlers like opportunities to play with all kinds of materials. Adults may avoid providing those materials which they view as messy. Experiences with a variety of textures help pretoddlers learn many different things. They also enjoy the feel and pleasure of fluids and gooey materials. Give one point for each experience listed below which is available for pretoddlers in your center:

____ sandboxes pretoddlers can walk in bare-footed
____ sandtables
____ sand and water combined
____ dishpans for water play
____ low tables for water play
____ bubble blowing
____ sponges, cloths and paintbrushes to use with water
____ wading pool (closely supervised, of course)
____ hose in outdoor play yard
____ dirt to dig in
____ finger paints
____ sponge painting
____ brush painting
____ play dough/clay
____ helping with cooking, mixing batter or kneading dough
____ other

____ Total

13 - 16 Keep up the good work!

7 - 12 Congratualations for each item you checked. Can you add any items to make the experiences in your center even more varied?

0 - 6 For the sake of the pretoddlers in your care, begin looking for ways to permit and encourage different kinds of experiences with gooey materials.

Suggest to parents that they bring pretoddlers in washable clothing that will allow both you and the children freedom to experiment with different materials and textures. Whenever possible, take off as many of their clothes as you can so that pretoddlers can use their whole bodies for feeling and experiencing the world around them.

USE RHYTHM AND MUSIC

One of the favorite activities of pretoddlers is listening to records. Keep a record player handy and play a favorite song when a child asks by pointing or saying a word or two. The standard children's songs like "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," "Jingle Bells" and "Mary Had A Little Lamb" are always favorites. The quality of music on records made especially for children is not always the best. So use a variety of adult music, including pop, rock, classical, ethnic, foreign and American folk. Sing a few simple songs again and again so the children can become very familiar with the words. Teach a few simple movement songs. It is great fun to respond at just the right time while singing "Pop! Goes The Weasel!" Make up chants to go with things you are doing like, "I'm pushing, I'm pushing. I'm pushing the swing." You will find the children making up their own chants to match the rhythm of their play.

Here are some music activities to enjoy:

Chant if you can't sing. Not everyone is equally comfortable singing out loud. You may find it hard to remember and sing melodies exactly as they were written. In that case, chant. This is simply saying the words in a rhythmic, sing-song way.

Involve the children's whole bodies. While you sing or play a record, hold a child's hands and sway to the rhythm of the song. This helps the child feel the beat of the music. Play games to help young children learn contrasts like high/low and fast/slow. You can sing high while you and a child or two stretch up tall. Then sing low while you squat down. Sing fast and run. Then sing and walk slowly.

Experiment with sounds. Have fun making sounds. Pretoddlers can clap, stamp, yell or whisper. They can use objects like cardboard tubes to hit together or pots and pans as drums. They can experiment with sound-producing toys. Extreme caution is required if you use shakers filled with rice, beans or the like. Make certain that the shakers are sealed tighly each time you get them out for the children to use.

PLAN WAYS TO ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Caregivers can help young children develop their bodies and use them in different ways. Attention to physical activity can become a natural part of each day's plan. As all parts of the skin are touched, a child gets a sense of movement. Clothing gets in the way of feeling. So let pretoddlers wear as little clothing as possible. Every movement activity has value only if it is fun for the child. Lots of praise should follow each new accomplishment. Allow children time to try new experiences. Provide for repeating and changing familiar activities. You can use common objects to encourage movement. A pretoddler can learn to climb up and down a hassock or easy chair. Straight chairs, pushed together, can be a tunnel or a bridge. Rolling on pillows is fun. Pretoddlers like to climb or hang from low railings. Instead of forbidding climbing, teach children how to get down safely. Use your imagination and good judgment to choose and invent movement activities to use with pretoddlers.

Adults can move in partnership with pretoddlers. Always consider the age and skill of each child. MOVE SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY FOR SAFE, FUN MOVEMENT EXPERIENCES:

Pushing back and forth Sitting on the floor with a child, put the soles of your feet together. The fun of this game is for the adult to make it just a little bit hard for the child to succeed at pushing.

Playing "horsey" Begin by kneeling down so the child can get off and on your back independently. Make sure the child can hold on and begin slowly. If any child has trouble balancing, another caregiver can help. Adjust your movement to the ability of the child, but try to vary moving fast and slow. Have a soft pillow nearby and kneel down so the child can practice falling off. This game requires that the child knows and follows certain rules.

Increasing the difficulty of activities An 18 month old may lose interest in playing "horsey." It is time to add some adventure and interest to the game. The child can try kneeling on the adult's back. Use a pillow to practice the skill of falling down. When a child feels secure in this position you can begin to crawl about slowly.

HAVE FUN WITH FINGER PLAYS

Finger plays give adults a fun way of sharing with children. They are helpful for cheering a fretful child. They provide an easy way to introduce new words and repeat old ones to help children learn language. Finger plays help a child name and use different body parts. This helps a child develop a sense of "self." Sometimes caregivers feel uncomfortable playing finger games. This feeling usually disappears once a caregiver learns, practices and then uses a few finger plays with young children. The pretoddlers in your room may already know "Pat-A-Cake" and "This Little Piggie." Start with these old stand-bys and add some new and different finger plays. You'll find new finger plays by reading books, asking other caregivers and making up finger plays of your own.

Here are some simple finger plays and directions to help you get started:

Frog

Two little frogs sat on a log.
(hold up index fingers)
"Gr-ump," said one.
(move one finger)
"Gr-ump," said the other.
(move other finger)
Splash went one;
Splash went the other.
(make diving motion with each finger)

You

This is your nose,
(point to nose)
These are your ears,
(point to ears)
These are your eyes
(point to eyes)
That make the tears.
This is your mouth,
(point to mouth)
It smiles when you're gay.
I hope it will always be just that way.

MAKE FLANNEL BOARDS

A flannel board is easy to make. All you need is some stiff backing and fabric to cover it. A cardboard carton can form the backing. Cover the backing with felt or flannel. Felt cutouts will stick to this surface. Other cutouts with a small piece of very fine sandpaper glued to the back will also stick to flannel boards. A caregiver can use the flannel board with a small group of children. With appropriate cutouts you can illustrate a story, song, poem or finger play. Or you can show and talk about groups of things like animals or fruits. Just remember that group time with pre-toddlers is short. Five minutes will do. A small group of five or six pretoddlers is about right. Be prepared for some to walk or crawl away.

Plan and prepare ahead to use a flannel board with your pretoddlers:

With a child alone Use several colors of felt to make shapes. Cut the shapes about two inches across. Make different shapes such as circles, squares, triangles, diamonds, stars and hearts. Also cut out outlines of animals, flowers, trees and houses. Some days put out the shapes. Other days use the outlines. Then a child working alone can move the felt shapes around experimenting with different designs. After the children have played with the outline shapes for awhile, add long, narrow strips and shapes such as rectangles and triangles.

With a group Prepare ahead of time to use the flannel board with a small group of pretoddlers. Decide what song, poem or subject you want to use. Gather or prepare the cutouts you will need. It may help to number the back side of each cutout if you need to use a particular order. Practice so you have the little details of your presentation clear in your own mind. For example, it helps to know ahead of time that your lap is a good place to put unused cutouts.

INCLUDE FRESH IDEAS AND NEW EXPERIENCES

Below are some activities you might plan to use with pretoddlers. Invite just one or a few children at a time to join you for a few minutes of fun everyday. Many of these activities will become a part of the children's own play if they later find the same toys or objects on the open shelves in your room.

Activity	What to do	Some things to talk about
rolling a ball	Have child sit on floor with legs spread so that ball can't get away. For a new challenge, give the child a box. Roll a ball and see if a standing child can trap the ball in a box.	Use two different-sized balls so you can talk about *big* and *little*.
throwing a bean bag	Set up a basket and let the children stand close and toss the bean bag.	Color of bean bag, *in* and *out*.
kicking a ball	Begin with a large beach ball. As skills improve, use smaller balls.	Size and color of the ball.
playing in water	Use a pan of water and some objects that float and some that don't (cork, toy boat, rock, metal toys).	For a good laugh show pretoddlers how to sink objects that float and then let them pop to the surface.
putting objects in a jar	Use clothespins or plastic keys. Make a game of picking up objects and dropping them into a jar or container. As a child's skill improves, decrease the size of the container opening.	Words to use include *in* and *out* and *empty* and *full*.

Activity	What to do	Some things to talk about
building with blocks	Working on a smooth, flat surface, begin with three blocks. Build a tower and ask the child to build a tower the same way. The child will want to add more blocks. Use large hollow blocks if the task is too hard for the child.	Talk about a *tower, big, on* and *on top of.*
nesting objects	Use two cans of different sizes, measuring spoons or nesting towers or cubes especially made for children. After a child can manage putting the little into the big one, add another.	Words to use are *big* and *little, in* and *out.*
blowing bubbles	Use the water table or several bowls. Add soap and watch bubbles appear! The young ones can use egg beaters; the older ones can blow through straws. Blow bubbles and let the children pop them.	You can talk about *soap, washing, bubbles* and *air.*
taking an adventure walk	Take two or three pretoddlers on a short walk to see what other parts of the center are like - the kitchen, staff room, or backside of the main entry desk.	Describe the sights and sounds you see and hear.

HOW IS YOUR FUNNY-BONE?

Pretoddlers have a sense of fun. They laugh, giggle and take delight in simple, sometimes silly things. With a light-hearted approach and using your body in an easy, free way, you and the pretoddlers can have fun with each other, simply using things at hand.

How many things can you think to do that would tickle a pretoddler's funny-bone?

Did you think of any of these?

wrinkle up your face and make funny noises

pretend real surprise each time you see a child playing "peek-a-boo"

imitate the sounds of machines or animals

move a doll or toy to make it look like it is walking and talking

walk your fingers up a child's arm and then tickle under the chin

crawl on your hands and knees

sit or lie on the floor and let children crawl on and over you

play "give and take" with toys or objects

CHOOSE BOOKS WITH BIG PICTURES

You will want to share the joy of books with your pretoddlers. This can be done in several ways. You can have a special area where pretoddlers can go when they choose to look at books. Another plan is for a caregiver to set out some books on a rug or in a corner at a particular time. Whenever possible, sit down with a book and a child will crawl in your lap and help you turn the pages, probably several at a time. Remember, it takes time and practice to learn to turn pages one at a time. Group story time may only happen with the oldest pretoddlers and with very *small* groups. Don't be surprised if a child wanders off after a few minutes. These young children are more interested in learning new words than in hearing you read a story. So say the names of pictures as you or a child points to them. It takes time for a child to understand that a picture of a dog represents a real-life animal. So it helps if the children can have lots of experience seeing both familiar and unfamiliar objects.

Choose books for pretoddlers carefully:

Bright colors are best. Young children like bright colors best. The Dick Bruna books, like *First Picture Book*, show a single, brightly colored picture on each page.

Animals are fun. Look for books with color photographs of baby animals, zoo animals and farm animals. Many are printed on heavy, plastic-coated cardboard pages.

Children like to touch books. You can use textured fabrics and make your own "feel" books for the children. Pretoddlers can feel a soft cotton bunny in Dorothy Kunhardt's *Pat The Bunny*.

Have fun making books. Cut familiar pictures from magazines. Use cardboard five by eight inches. Put one picture on each page. Cover with clear self-sticking plastic paper. Punch holes and string together with a cord. Make picture books of the pretoddlers in your room.

Television has no place in the pretoddler environment. These young children have too much to do, learn and see to spend time in front of a TV set.

AVOID SUGAR AND FOODS THAT CAUSE CHOKING

Snack times are important events for pretoddlers each morning and afternoon. These mini-meals contribute to a child's daily food intake. Children need vitamins, minerals and other nutrients to be healthy and happy. The best snacks are those without sugar, too much salt or additives. For children under 18 months of age some foods are not digestible or may cause choking. These include corn, leafy vegetables, cucumbers, bacon rind, baked beans, chocolate, olives, *small* carrot sticks and uncooked onions. *Nuts and popcorn are not recommended snacks for pretoddlers.* The younger children do like softer, mushier and somewhat bland foods.

Here are some ideas for healthful snacks for pretoddlers:

Fresh Fruits:

apple slices (peeled)
pear slices (peeled)
peach slices (peeled)
orange sections
berries
cantalope pieces
bananas

Raw Vegetables:

carrot sticks (large)
cauliflower, broccoli bits
asparagus bits
kohlrabi slices
green beans
turnip slices
peas

Meats:

crisp bacon
frankfurters
small meatballs
ham bits
beef jerky
ground meat "sticks"
tuna fish

Breads, Cereals:

buttered toast, cut in fourths
pretzels
bagels and cream cheese
cold cereals (dry or with milk)
whole grain crackers

Dairy:

cheese bits
hard-cooked eggs
cottage cheese (add fruit)
yogurt (freeze for fun)

CHECK YOUR CREATIVITY AND SKILL WITH MATERIALS

Remember, when we talk about pretoddler environments, that includes the people there. What caregivers do and how they do it is important. Caring for young children is both fun and hard work. Experience and skill make it more fun and less work. Use this checklist to discover your own strengths. For any item that you don't check think of wa to improve your skills as a caregiver.

____ I learn from my own experiences by keeping a log or daily diary or thinking about each day.

____ I repeat my successes and look for new ways of doing things when problems arise.

____ I write down my plans for the day.

____ I arrive early enough to collect my thoughts and needed materials.

____ I know some simple games, activities, songs and finger plays that pretoddlers like so I can play with one or a few children at a time.

____ My daily plans include time for activities that involve touching and talking with pretoddlers.

____ I include simple, short art experiences as a part of the pretoddler program.

____ I plan creative experiences that the children will enjoy and don't worry about making products to please the parents.

____ I make definite plans for music as well as playing records on request.

____ I plan different ways to use the flannel board.

____ I make picture collections and books to reflect the children's backgrounds and experiences.

____ I am always looking for materials or new ideas to use with the children in my care. I use books, magazines, other caregivers and my director as resources.

____ I share the poems, songs, finger plays and activities that I know and create with the children in a fun, enthusiastic way.

FINDING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT CAREGIVING

KEEP TRACK OF GOOD IDEAS

Variety and change make your job more interesting and fun. Of course, a child will always enjoy repeating one or more favorites with you. Many caregivers find real value in keeping track of the successful ideas they have found and used. There are different ways to collect these. Some caregivers jot notes on the back of napkins, some make cards and file them in boxes and others make their own notebooks. Caregivers also find picture collections helpful. Some caregivers make and use activity cards in their rooms. These cards list things to do or ways to use a certain toy with the children.

Here are some suggestions for ways to keep track of your good ideas:

Your own private collection Ideas - even good ones - have a way of slipping away. When you see a good idea that you'd like to remember, write it down and file it for later use. You may choose to write your ideas on index cards and keep them in a recipe file box. Or you may choose to keep a notebook. A three-ring binder allows you to add pages and reorganize as you choose. It helps to file ideas by categories like *movement, art, active games* and *poems*. The advantage of file cards is their convenient size. You can put a card in a pocket. Then you can quickly glance at the words to a new song or finger play.

Picture collections You may want to start your own picture collection. Some caregivers save and share good pictures with others in their center. Large, colorful, simple pictures of animals, vehicles and people give you and the children real things to talk about. Large pictures are best stored on end. A cardboard box with cardboard sheets for section dividers serves this purpose. Then pictures which are mounted on cardboard and covered with clear, plastic self-sticking paper can be used again and again.

Activity cards An envelope taped to the wall or a shelf can hold activity cards for an area. Each card can list the materials needed, how to use things or suggest things to say. For example, cards may show different ways pretoddlers of different ages and skills will play with blocks.

MAKE YOUR OWN PLAY DOUGH

Play dough that you can make is good to use with pretoddlers. You can choose a recipe which is perfectly safe even if eaten by a young child. The fun for pretoddlers is mostly in pinching, patting, poking and rolling the play dough. Using dough with rolling pins and cookie cutters is really better with older children. The recipe below makes dough which can be used over and over. Just store it in a plastic bag in the refrigerator between uses. We recommend a few drops of oil of cloves. This gives the dough a nice aroma and helps retard the growth of mold. The recipe can be made with or without food coloring. The choice is yours. Mix the dough ahead of time and knead it gently until it holds together and is easy for pretoddlers to use. With practice you will be able to make a nice, pliable dough. To keep the dough from sticking, dust the children's hands with a little flour.

To make this recipe, mix all the liquids together and then add the flour and salt gradually:

1 cup water

a few drops of oil of cloves

a few drops of food coloring

4 tablespoons of oil

2 cups of salt

2 cups of flour

Stir with a spoon until the dough begins to get stiff. Dust your hands lightly with flour and use them to finish mixing the ingredients. Knead gently on a surface lightly dusted with flour.

LEARN THE ART OF SCROUNGING

Learning to ask for materials is basic to the art of scrounging. When others learn that you work in a child care center, often they are glad to have you haul away their surplus materials or outdated supplies. Scrap lumber, fabric, packing crates or materials, paint, wallpaper and plants are just a few of the things you might uncover. Remember, local public libraries are good places to borrow books, records and other materials. Be aware that there probably are sources for surplus or donated materials on the installation where your center is located. Discuss with your director these sources for free materials as outlined in the *Administrative Guidebook*.

Here are some more sources of information to help you learn the art of scrounging:

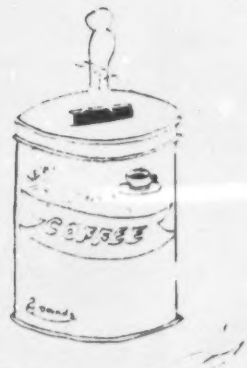
Beautiful Junk (DHEW Publication No. OHD 76-31036). The project suggestions are mostly for older children, but this tells where to get free and inexpensive materials. The list of sources includes everything from soft-drink companies and carpet shops to parents and suggests some things to ask for from each. Order by name and number from DHEW, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Washington, DC 20201.

Free And Inexpensive Materials For Preschool And Early Childhood, 2nd ed., by Robert Monahan, Belmont, California: Fearon Publishers, Inc., 1977. This book lists places to write for free and inexpensive materials and suggests local sources for supplies.

Designing A Day Care Center, by E. Evans, G. Saia, and E. Evans. Boston: Beacon Press, 1974. This is a good book for those who have access to carpentry services or volunteer labor. This book has photographs and plans for shelves, furniture and play units. These can be built to fit your specific needs at a savings.

MAKE YOUR OWN TOYS AND MATERIALS

The toys that pretoddlers enjoy the most for the longest time are often rather simple. Containers, measuring cups and spoons, funnels and empty boxes make fun toys for these young children. You also can make good toys without spending too much money. You can use household materials or inexpensive items. There are many books available, suggesting ideas for what to use and how to make things for children. One such book is *Play And Playthings For The Preschool Child* by Elizabeth Matterson. New York, New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1967. This paperback book tells how to use common items or natural materials to make toys for young children. To get ideas for what to make, obtain manufacturers' catalogs. Most describe how the toy is to be used and by what age child. All you have to do is find the right materials to copy or make a toy nearly like the manufactured toy. Some examples are covering cans of different sizes with self-sticking paper to make nesting toys. Another is to cut a small hole in the plastic lid of a large can. Pretoddlers can practice putting clothespins through the small hole.



Here is a list of manufacturers who supply catalogs upon request:

Creative Playthings, P. O. Box 1100, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.

Childcraft, 155 E. 23rd Street, New York, New York 10010.

Child Play, 43 East 19th Street, New York, New York 10003.

Developmental Learning Materials, 7440 Natchez Avenue, Niles, Illinois 60648.

Creating Environments For Pretoddlers contains lots of suggestions for planning and managing pretoddler activities. You may want more information about pretoddlers and how they develop. You may want to have more details about what they can and like to do. The list of books and records below may give you new ideas to add to what you already know.

LEARNING MORE ABOUT CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Infant And Child In The Culture Of Today, Revised ed., by Arnold Gesell, MD, et al. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974.

Based on research at the Gesell Institute of Child Development, this book describes children from birth to age five. There are sections helpful to pretoddler caregivers. There are detailed behavior profiles for the 15, 18 and 24 month olds. The section about nursery school describes what to expect of a child in a group setting at 18 and 24 months. One appendix suggests toys, play materials and equipment for children 18 and 24 months of age. Another appendix lists books for children 15 to 24 months of age.

The Second Twelve Months Of Life by Frank and Theresa Caplan. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1977.

With over 150 photographs and monthly charts, this book details the change and growth of pretoddler experiences. The growth charts list physical, social and personal changes. They also suggest routines the child can and likes to do, as well as toys and play activities.

The First Three Years Of Life by Burton L. White. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975.

If you want more developmental information, try this book. It divides the first three years of life into seven phases. Of special interest to the pretoddler caregiver is phase VI, 14 to 24 months of age. Referring to the end of phase V will help you understand the 13 month old. This discusses typical changes in the pretoddler's body, mind and feelings. Although this book was written for parents, it has very useful information for caregivers.

HELPING CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH PLAY

Children Learn Physical Skills, Vol. 1 - Birth To Three Years by Liselott Diem. Washington, DC: AAHPER Publications, 1974.

With delightful photographs of young children in action and simple, step-by-step text, this book describes many easy ways to help children gain self-confidence, creative thinking and coordination using nothing more complicated than trustworthy adults, ordinary furniture, hoops and doorway gym bars.

Developmental Play As A Learning Tool: Curriculum Guide For Infant-Toddler Education Program by Kyong Lischner, et al. Glassboro, New Jersey: Bozorth Early Childhood Demonstration Center, 1975.

This book has delightful illustrations and a relaxed, yet sound approach to using play in the group care setting. The years one to three are divided into six stages. The main behaviors of each are listed. The format makes it easy to find age-appropriate activities for subjects, such as sleeping, blocks, eating and sounds (music).

Learning Activities For The Young Preschool Child by Rita Watrin and Paul Hanly Furfey. New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1978.

This book gives lots of activities - 170 to be exact. The organization of this book is very helpful. For each activity you are given an appropriate age level, objective, materials list, suggested things to say, some helpful hints and things to do to repeat or expand upon the activity later. This book contains good ideas, but use it with caution. Only the beginning levels of each activity are appropriate for pretoddlers. Beware of over-organizing time and activities for these young children.

Your Child From Birth To Two Years by Sandra Streepy (revised ed. by Athina Leka Aston, 1977). New York: Fountain Publishing Company, Inc., 1971.

The last three chapters, 12 to 15 months, 15 to 18 months and 18 to 24 months of age, give useful developmental changes and the play that best suits these changes. The appendix includes books for parents, pamphlets for parents, books for babies and children, songbooks and records.

From One To Two Years by Marilyn Segal and Don Adcock. Rolling Hills Estates, California: B. L. Winch & Associates, 1974.

The many photographs show pretoddlers at play in their home environments. What they like to do can happen equally as well in the child care setting. Some of the toys suggested to make at home would not be sturdy enough to last very long in the group care setting.

Lullabies And Nightsongs by A. Wilder, M. Sendah and W. Engvich. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965.

Maurice Sendak's drawings illustrate this songbook of lullabies.

PLANNING AND MANAGING GROUP CARE

The Toddler Center: A Practical Guide To Day Care For One- And Two-Year-Olds by Marion O'Brien, et al. Baltimore: University Park Press, 1979.

This is a big, thick book that has tips covering every detail of group care for pretoddlers from biting to record keeping. It gives lots of information of great value to directors as well as caregivers. This book alone would be a good resource for setting up and operating a pretoddler group care environment.

Daycare For Infants by E. Belle Evans and George E. Saia. Boston: Beacon Press, 1972.

Although most of this book is devoted to planning and operating a day care center, it has one good chapter devoted to pretoddler care. The equipment, music and book appendices are very useful. Included is a brief description of how to arrange the environment to include various ages in one room.

Stimulating Group Care For Infants And Toddlers by Arlee Vallery. University of Alabama: Division of Continuing Education, 1972.

This is a small pamphlet, but it has good lists of toys, books, music and easy art activities for young children. It briefly describes group care and guidance techniques.

Serving Infants by D. Huntington, S. Provence, and R. Parker (Eds.). Washington, DC: DHEW Publication No. (OCD) 72-8.

This publication, part of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare day care and child development series, contains basic information helpful to both caregivers and center directors. Useful lists give information sources on day care and child development and suggested equipment, supplies, toys and books.

Good Things For Babies by Sandy Jones. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976.

This book outlines safety and consumer advice for products designed for children up to 24 months old.

RECORDS

Share all kinds of music with your pretoddlers. Look especially for titles by Ella Jenkins, Pete Seeger, Nancy Raven, Tom Glazer, Hap Palmer, Woody Guthrie, Burl Ives or Alan Mills. The list below is just a sample of some of the many good records available.

American Folk Songs For Children. Pete Seeger (Folkways FC7601). "This Old Man," "She'll Be Coming Around The Mountain," and "Train Is A-Coming" are some of the old favorites sung in a simple, direct style.

Lullabies And Other Children's Songs With Nancy Raven. (Pacific Cascade LPL7007-B). Short songs are sung and chanted, including a variety of sounds, rhythms and tempos.

A Long Time. Ella Jenkins, Brother John Sellers, Joseph Brewer (Folkways FC7754). This is a fine collection of Negro spirituals and rhythmic music.

Saturday Morning Children's Concert. Narrated by Dexter Michael (Golden Records LP219). A variety of themes and moods provides a different kind of listening.

Songs To Grow On. Woody Guthrie (Folkways FT1502). Also has the title, *Songs To Grow On For Mother And Child.* Nursery Days (Folkways FC7675). Guthrie sings 12 of his chants in a simple, honest way.

The Feel Of Music. Hap Palmer (Educational Activities, Inc.). Hap Palmer uses good rhythms and a variety of tempos. Let pretoddlers listen and move as they choose.

Barnyard Animals. This includes the actual sounds of cows, chickens, horses and ducks. Other albums have the sounds of birds, meadows, swamps and the sea. Write for a free leaflet: Drall Yankees, Inc., Mill Road, Foster, RI 02825.

Send 25 cents each for catlogs of books and records. Request "Early Childhood" and "The Family." Children's Music Center, Inc., 5373 W. Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90019.

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